

6-7 High Street Oxford



Archaeological Excavation Report




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6-7 High Street, Oxford

Archaeological Excavation Report

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Table of Contents

Summary.....	4
1 Introduction.....	5
1.1 Scope of work.....	5
1.2 Location geology and topography.....	5
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	6
1.4 Acknowledgements.....	6
2 Evaluation Aims and Methodology.....	7
2.1 Aims.....	7
2.2 Methodology.....	7
3 Results.....	8
3.1 Introduction and presentation of results.....	8
3.2 General soils and ground conditions.....	8
3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits.....	8
3.4 Test Pit 4.....	8
3.5 Finds summary.....	10
4 Discussion.....	11
4.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	11
4.2 Interpretation.....	11
Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory.....	13
Appendix B. Finds Reports.....	15
B.1 Pottery.....	15
B.2 Clay pipe.....	18
B.3 Ceramic building material.....	18



B.4 Metalwork.....	18
B.5 Stone.....	18
B.6 Animal bone.....	19
Appendix C. Environmental Reports.....	20
C.1 Environmental samples.....	20
Appendix D. Bibliography and References.....	24
Appendix E. Summary of Site Details.....	25



List of Figures

Plate 1	Section view of the cellar pit
Fig. 1	Site location
Fig. 2	Location plan
Fig. 3	Test pit location plan
Fig. 4	Sections 1000 and 1001
Fig. 5	Unusual post-medieval redware vessel



Summary

In June 2012, Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological excavation in the basement of 6-7 High Street, Oxford. An area of 2.55m x 2.30m was excavated and provided evidence of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval archaeological deposits.

A possible late Saxon cellar pit was recorded which had been truncated by later pits. Charred remains associated with the cellar pit were carbon dated to the late 8th-9th Century.

A series of medieval pits and two wells were also present, dating to the early medieval period. One of the two wells appears to have remained in use for a considerable period of time and was finally backfilled in the period AD 1620-1650.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In June 2012, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an excavation at 6-7 High Street, Oxford (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Stride Treglown on behalf of Henderson Global Investors (HGI) and consisted of an excavation at the location of a planned lift shaft.
- 1.1.2 HGI were granted Listed Building Consent in relation to proposed alteration to the internal features of the building, primarily the reduction of the basement floor surface by approximately 1m.
- 1.1.3 The consent was granted with the following condition, as recommended by the Oxford City County Archaeologist.

No development shall take place until the developer has:

- 1. Carried out an archaeological evaluation of the site in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved in writing by the planning authority*
- 2. Secured the implementation of a scheme of mitigation of any significant archaeological impact, which may be achieved by redesign, or by archaeological recording action in accordance with a supplementary written scheme of investigation to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: Because the development may have a damaging effect on known or suspected elements of the historic environment of the people of Oxford and their visitors, including Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval remains in accordance with policy HE2 of the adopted Local Plan 2001-2016.

- 1.1.4 OA were issued a brief for the required works by Oxford City Council (OCC 2012). The work consisted of two stages of work; the first a series of test pits and the second, subject to the result of Stage 1, a full excavation of the basement or detailed watching brief during ground reductions.
- 1.1.5 In response, OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation for Stage 1 (OA 2012a) which specified the methodologies that would be employed and a provisional program of work to fulfil the requirements of OCC.
- 1.1.6 Stage 1 of the works was carried out by OA in February 2012 and identified significant Saxon and Medieval archaeological features (OA 2012b).
- 1.1.7 Based on the results of these evaluations, Henderson Global Investors, in consultation with Oxford Archaeology, altered their design to avoid the reduction of the basement floor, thus preserving this important area of well-preserved archaeology in central historic Oxford in situ.
- 1.1.8 An addendum was added to the WSI stating that only an area 2.55m x 2.3m for the installation of a lift shaft, requiring a reduction in the basement level, would be subject to archaeological excavation. This was agreed by the Oxford City Archaeologist.

1.2 Location geology and topography

- 1.2.1 6-7 High Street is located on the northern side of the High Street close to the historic cross roads, Carfax, at the centre of Oxford (Fig. 2). The site lies within the city parish



of St Michael at the Northgate. The site is located within the Oxford Central (City and University) Conservation Area and within the designated Oxford City Council Area of Archaeological Interest for Oxford.

- 1.2.2 The geology of the area is Summertown-Radley river gravels overlying Oxfordshire Clay and West Walton Formation (Mudstone).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The site has been the subject of a desk-based assessment (OA 2011). The conclusion of that assessment (as stated in the brief, OCC 2012) was that potential existed for Late Saxon, medieval and post medieval remains associated with tenement activity in this location. The site being located along one of the principal street frontages of the Late Saxon and medieval town, close to the central cross roads at Carfax. The tenements here would have fronted onto the regular street market that spread along the streets approaching Carfax.
- 1.3.2 The assessment noted the potential for the survival of deep-cut archaeological features in this location, such as late 10th-11th century Saxon cellar pits and/or later medieval or post-medieval features such as wells and deep pits. Previous construction works in the 1950s may have significantly truncated the basement area, although the surviving plans from this period indicated that undisturbed areas may survive between existing foundations.
- 1.3.3 The evaluations carried out by OA in February 2012 consisted of three 1x1m test pits (Fig. 3). These showed a largely undisturbed archaeological horizon directly below the rubble levelling for the existing concrete slab floor, approximately 0.3m below the floor surface. A number of pits containing domestic waste and demolition material, possibly relating to animal processing, were exposed. Dating indicated activity from the Saxon period continuing through to the early post-medieval period. An absence of clay pipes and modern material suggest that the archaeological horizon was sealed in the early post-medieval period.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Henderson Global Investors for funding the project. David Radford monitored the project for Oxford City Council. The fieldwork was supervised by Steve Leech, assisted by Chris Richardson. This report was produced by John Boothroyd and Steve Leech. The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Richard Brown.



2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the Stage 1 investigation were:

- (i) To investigate the presence /absence of archaeological remains within the basement that may be subject to development impact.
- (ii) To characterise the archaeological remains should they be present and obtain sufficient data to inform a programme of mitigation (Stage 2).

2.1.2 Given the very limited nature of the agreed mitigation works, the aims were not updated prior to commencing Stage 2.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The area intended for lift pit construction was archaeologically excavated to natural geology. A trench measuring 2.55m x 2.3m by 1.2m deep was hand excavated down to the first significant archaeological horizon at 62.08m OD. All archaeological deposits, features and structures were examined, recorded and interpreted and artefacts recovered as per Oxford Archaeology's standard methodology (OA 1992).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The following section summarises the results of the excavation from the earliest to the latest archaeological deposits encountered during the archaeological works. Detailed context descriptions are tabulated in the context inventory (Appendix A), and described within the stratigraphic text where they are integral to the interpretation of the context in question. Stage 2 has been recorded as a continuation of the Stage 1 evaluation in which Test Pits 1-3 were excavated, as such the excavations of the lift pit have been identified as Test Pit 4 (Fig. 3).

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soils and ground conditions were good.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 The distribution of archaeological deposits was limited, due to modern truncation occurring during the underpinning of the buildings foundations in the 1950s. There was a large stepped concrete ground beam along the southern extent of the trench. The construction cut for this structure ran from the northern edge of the trench at a 45 degree angle downwards to the south, where at a depth of 61.22m OD the cut continued vertically down. This left a sloping area, 1.40m long by 2.5m wide, of undisturbed archaeological deposits within the trench.

3.4 Test Pit 4

3.4.1 The earliest archaeological feature within Test Pit 4 was the truncated remains of a pit (context 1018) and associated posthole (1038). Pit 1018 (Fig. 4) was cut into the natural gravels at 61.37m OD. The visible extent of the pit was 1.28m in length, 0.40m deep, and a width of 0.10m within the excavation area.

3.4.2 The pit contained nine fills (1014, 1033-1037, 1039-1041). Context 1041, was a light brown clay silt, 0.04m thick. This was overlain by context 1040 which was a black silt, 0.02m thick. A bulk sample (1005) was taken from this layer and produced wheat grains, an oat grain and vetch or pea. Context 1039, was a light greyish brown silty clay, 0.12m thick, overlying a completely degraded but recognisable wooden floor remnant (1040). Sample 1004 from context 1039 produced wheat, oat and barley grain and a possible single example of rye. A radio carbon date was obtained from a grain of Barley. The results give a late 8th-9th century date for the material (1186 +/- 27 BP (SUERC-43616); cal AD 771- 898 (91.2% probability) or cal AD 809-884 (61.7% probability) using OxCal v. 4.1.7 software (copyright Bronk-Ramsey 2010)). In addition a small but identifiable sherd of Late Saxon Oxford Shelley Ware (775-1050) was retrieved from the sample residue.

3.4.3 Cutting through the lower layers of the pit was posthole 1038, 0.4m in diameter and 0.24m deep, containing two fills. The lower fill, 1037, was a grey clay, 0.05m thick. The upper fill, 1036, a light grey clay, 0.24m thick, was indistinguishable from one of the fills of the pit. It produced a fragment of quernstone, possibly of Roman origin. Sample 1006 from context 1036 produced wheat grain and grains of six-rowed barley as well as a small vetch or pea.



- 3.4.4 Context 1035 formed a layer above the fills of posthole 1038. It was a yellowish brown silty sand, 0.12m thick. Overlying this, was context 1034, a horizontal lens of greenish brown silty sand, 0.02m thick. Context 1033, a compact red sand, 0.26m thick, again with no finds, seemed to represent a dump of heat affected material, infilling a void over the deposits of posthole 1038. Context 1014, a orange brown silty sand, 0.15m thick, was the last deposit in the pit sequence.
- 3.4.5 Pit 1049 (Fig. 4) cut the fills of pit 1018, and was cut by pit 1006. The pit, only seen in section, was 0.5m wide and 0.2m deep with a moderate slope and flat base. It contained a single fill, 1050, a light grey sandy silt which produced no artefactual evidence.
- 3.4.6 Pit 1043 (not illustrated) was incomplete in plan as it had been truncated by well 1032, pit 1006, pit/well 1048 and by modern disturbance to the south. It was at least 1.60m x 1.50m in extent, and was filled with context 1042, a mid grey brown clay silt containing no finds.
- 3.4.7 Pit or well 1048 (not illustrated) was a sub-rectangular feature, at least 1.1m by 0.8m in extent, with vertical sides, which contained three fills (1045, 1046 and 1047). It was excavated to a depth of 0.8m and probing indicated that it was at least 1.8m deep. All of the fills produced medieval pottery and fills 1045 and 1047 also contained animal bone, including a worked cattle metacarpal probably intended to be a bone skate. The pit was cut by pit 1006.
- 3.4.8 Cut 1032 (Fig. 4), 1.30m wide, 0.6m in length and over 0.95m deep, formed the construction cut for stone-lined well 1016. It was probably circular in plan with steep or vertical sides. Well lining 1016 comprised roughly hewn limestone blocks, with an average size of 0.1m x 0.1m, and formed a circular wall 10 courses high, 0.7m wide and at least 0.9m deep.
- 3.4.9 The construction cut 1032 was backfilled with redeposited materials forming steep tip lines. The fills (1007, 1023-1030) were generally sands or silty sands. Context 1007 (not illustrated), a dark grey silt, contained two sherds of early medieval pottery and a sherd of possible late Saxon pottery as well as animal bone.
- 3.4.10 The fill of the interior of the well, context 1044, was a grey brown silty clay, which contained frequent limestone blocks, post-medieval pottery and animal bone. Additional artefactual material was recovered from the well backfill (given context number 1052) during final preparation of the lift pit by the main contractor. Forty-nine sherds of post-medieval pottery from at least twenty contemporary vessels, from the period AD 1620-1650, were recovered.
- 3.4.11 Overlying the well construction cut and lining was layer 1022, a mid grey brown clay silt, with no finds, this layer sealed the well and was cut by pit 1006.
- 3.4.12 Pit 1010 (not illustrated) was just visible in the eastern side of the trench. It was possibly sub-rectangular in shape, 1.70m wide, 0.10m long and more than 0.95m deep, and truncated the Eastern side of well construction cut, 1032. It was contained four fills. Context 1020 was a mid grey brown sandy silt, 0.3m thick, and contained medieval pottery and animal bone. Context 1019 was an orange brown sandy gravel, 0.22m thick and contained no finds. Context 1009 was a mid grey sandy silt, 0.20m thick and contained no finds, and context 1008 an orange brown sand, 0.18m thick, and contained no finds.
- 3.4.13 Pit 1006 (Fig. 4) truncated the western side of well construction cut 1032 and also cut through cellar pit 1018, and was cut by pit 1013 to the west. It was 2.2m wide, 1.41m



long and more than 1.2m deep and contained three fills. Context 1017 was a dark grey sandy silt, 0.5m thick, and contained no finds, context 1011 was a mid grey brown sandy silt, 0.5 thick and contained medieval pottery (as well as a single sherd of late Saxon pottery) and animal bone, and context 1005 was a grey brown sandy silt, 0.45m thick and contained 26 sherds of medieval pottery and a range of animal bone including duck, cattle, sheep and pig.

- 3.4.14 Pit 1013 (Fig. 4) cut pit 1006 to the west. It was 1.2m in length, 0.55m wide and 1.2m deep and contained a single fill, 1012, a mid grey brown sandy silt containing medieval pottery and animal bone.

3.5 Finds summary

- 3.5.1 A total of 124 sherds of pottery weighing 8.372kg were recovered during the evaluation. The majority of the material dated to the early medieval (c AD 1070-1250) and post-medieval (AD 1620-1650) periods. In addition, three sherds of late Saxon pottery were recovered as residual finds in later contexts.
- 3.5.2 A single fragment of clay tobacco pipe of 17th century date was recovered.
- 3.5.3 Five fragments of roof tile, of medieval and post-medieval date, were recovered from two contexts.
- 3.5.4 Sixteen iron objects, all nails or nail fragments, were recovered.
- 3.5.5 A fragment of lower rotary quernstone was recovered, possibly Roman in origin.
- 3.5.6 A total of 273 fragments of animal bone weighing 4.6kg was recovered, mostly in good condition. Species represented include cattle, sheep/goat, pig as well as goose, domestic fowl, cat, red deer and possibly quail. Evidence of butchery was present and a large cattle metacarpal had been worked at either end, probably representing an unfinished bone skate.
- 3.5.7 Three environmental samples from a single feature (pit 1038) were assessed. All three samples were dominated by cereal grain, largely wheat but also barley, oat and possibly rye.
- 3.5.8 Detailed descriptions of the finds and environmental samples can be found in Appendices B and C respectively.



4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 Extensive modern truncation had occurred within the area of excavation with the result that most of the features recorded had been at least partially destroyed, in some cases appearing in the section of the test-pit only. In addition, excavation was undertaken to a maximum depth of 1.2m below the current floor level meaning that some features were not excavated to their full depth. Consequently, only limited investigation of the deposit sequence was possible. As a result, the interpretation of the features revealed is necessarily tentative.

4.2 Interpretation

4.2.1 The earliest feature recorded during the excavation was pit 1038, a flat-based feature containing a series of horizontal fills. The feature is tentatively dated to the late 8th-9th century by a radiocarbon dating of charred grain on its degraded floor. This is the earliest radiocarbon date yet obtained for material from the central area of the medieval town, although activity of this date is known from the area of the Thames Crossing in St Aldate's, including numerous burials from Christ Church and from St Aldate's Church. Unfortunately, the date range spans most of the 9th century and only a very limited area of contemporary archaeology survived within the excavation, limiting the extent to which this result can inform the debate on the origins of the late Saxon burh itself. However, it provides striking new evidence for the possibility of occupation of this period in the very centre of the medieval town, although its nature remains unclear.

4.2.2 In form, the pit with its associated posthole is similar to the large number of late Saxon cellar pits which have been previously recorded in Oxford centre, for example, at Queen St and 117 High St (Dodd 2003, pps408 and 414 respectively). These are frequently seen at the base of archaeological sequences and are also often either undated or contain only small fragmented quantities of Late Saxon pottery by which they are assigned dates of the 10th-11th centuries.



Plate 1 Section view of the cellar pit - *The cellar pit can be seen to the left of the section overlying natural, with the indentation of a removed post to the left corner of the excavation and a black line indicating degraded wooden floor. It should be noted the cellar pit does not exist in plan within the lift pit as the medieval pits above it in section cut down into the area of the lift pit. The medieval pits were in turn largely removed within the lift pit by the construction trench for the concrete foundation seen in the foreground. This can be seen on the left section (see also Fig 4) and renders plan illustration of the excavation uninformative in relation the archaeological remains. To the right of the cellar pit is the cut and construction of a medieval well. This feature also was visible only in section but the lining was later cut through in order to retrieve finds.*

- 4.2.3 No other features of this date were present although three sherds of late Saxon pottery were recovered as residual finds in later features. In addition, a Saxon loomweight was found within the backfill of a stone drain or wall foundation during the earlier evaluation (Test Pit 2) suggesting more widespread activity of this date at the site.
- 4.2.4 The next phase of activity is represented by a series of pits (1006, 1010, 1013, 1043 and 1049). Most of these contained pottery, largely from cooking pots, dating to the period AD 1075-1250. In addition to the pits, a possible well (1048) was also recorded.
- 4.2.5 Butchery waste was recorded from the pits. It can be noted that the west of the High St was called Butchers Street in the early 13th century (VCH <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22803#n326>) and was the location of the city shambles. However the limited nature of the investigation precludes any direct association between the bone assemblage and medieval commerce.
- 4.2.6 A second, stone-lined, well (1016) produced a small quantity of early medieval pottery from its construction cut. That it dates to this period seems to be confirmed since the backfill of the construction cut underlies medieval pit 1006. However, the well appears



to have remained in use, or at least open in its upper part, for a considerable period of time. The backfill within the well shaft itself contained a considerable quantity of pottery closely dated to the period 1620-1650, providing a date for the final disuse of the feature. The assemblage contains sherds from at least 20 vessels, including bowls, storage jars, pipkins and skillets. One particularly unusual vessel (Fig. 5) resembles a mug with an unusually narrow and inward-sloping rim and it is suggested that it may have had a more specialised function, perhaps as a flower vase or measure.

- 4.2.7 This phase of activity is presumably associated with buildings fronting on to the High Street, beyond the area of excavation.



Appendix A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench containing inter-cutting Medieval pits and Saxon cellar structure.					Avg. depth (m)	1.2
					Width (m)	2.55
					Length (m)	2.3
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1000	Layer	-	0.16	Modern rubble	-	-
1001	Cut	-	1.2	Modern construction cut	-	-
1002	Fill	-	1.2	Construction cut fill	-	-
1003	Cut		1.2	Modern construction cut		
1004	Fill		1.2	Construction cut fill		
1005	Fill		0.45	Pit fill	Pot, animal bone	Spot date c1170-1250
1006	Cut		1.2	Pit		
1007	Fill		0.28	Pit fill	Pot, animal bone, iron object, shell, mortar, stone	Spot date c1050-1250
1008	Fill		0.18	Pit fill		
1009	Fill		0.2	Pit fill		
1010	Cut		0.95	Pit		
1011	Fill		0.5	Pit fill	Pot, animal bone	Spot date c1050-1250
1012	Fill		1	Pit fill	Pot, animal bone, shell	Spot date c1075-1250
1013	Cut		1.2	Pit		
1014	Fill		0.15	Pit fill		
1015	Void					
1016	wall		0.9	Well lining		
1017	Fill		0.5	Pit fill		
1018	Cut		0.4	Cellar pit		
1019	Fill		0.22	Pit fill		
1020	Fill		0.3	Pit fill	Pot, animal bone	Spot date c1025-1250
1021	Void					



1022	Layer		0.1	Layer over well		
1023	Fill		0.32	Well fill		
1024	Fill		0.1	Well fill		
1025	Fill		0.06	Well fill		
1026	Fill		0.1	Well fill		
1027	Fill		0.07	Well fill		
1028	Fill		0.07	Well fill		
1029	Fill		0.08	Well fill		
1030	Fill		0.04	Well fill		
1031	Fill		0.28	Well fill		
1032	Cut		0.95	Well cut		
1033	Fill		0.26	Cellar pit fill		
1034	Fill		0.20	Cellar pit fill		
1035	Fill		0.12	Cellar Pit Fill		
1036	Fill		0.24	Cellar pit /posthole fill	Iron object, stone	
1037	Fill		0.05	Posthole fill		
1038	Cut		0.24	Posthole cut		
1039	Fill		0.12	Cellar pit fill	Animal bone Pottery	Spot date c 775-1050
1040	Fill		0.02	Cellar pit fill	Fired clay	
1041	Fill		1041	Cellar pit fill		
1042	Fill		-	Pit fill		
1043	Cut			Pit cut		
1044	Fill		0.90	Well back fill	Pot,animal bone, iron, CBM	Spot date c1620-1650
1045	Fill		0.20	Pit fill	Pot	Spot date c1050-1250
1046	Fill		0.07	Pit fill	Pot	Spot date c 1075-1250
1047	Fill		0.70	Pit fill		
1048	Cut		0.8	Pit cut		
1049	Cut		0.2	Pit cut		
1050	Fill		0.2	Pit fill		
1051	Nat			Natural Gravels		
1052	FR			Finds reference for fill of well 1016	Pot,animal bone, shell, clay- pipe, CBM	Various



Appendix B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

by John Cotter

Introduction and methodology

- B.1.1 A total of 124 sherds of pottery weighing 8.372kg. were recovered from ten contexts. These represent a range of medieval and early post-medieval pottery fabrics. All the pottery was examined and spot-dated during the assessment stage. For each context the total pottery sherd count and weight were recorded, followed by the context spot-date which is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types in the context are estimated to have been produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the presence of datable types were also recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc.) and any other attributes worthy of note (eg. decoration etc).

Date and nature of assemblages

- B.1.2 Overall the pottery assemblage is in a fragmentary though good condition. The post-medieval pottery is in particularly good condition (see below). Ordinary domestic pottery types are represented. These are detailed in the spreadsheet and summarised here. Fabric codes referred to for the medieval wares are those of the Oxfordshire type series (Mellor 1994). Codes used for the post-medieval wares (after c 1500) are those of the Museum of London which can be applied to most assemblages in southern England.
- B.1.3 The range of medieval and post-medieval wares here is typical of sites along the main thoroughfares of central Oxford. Most of the medieval pottery here (8 contexts) appears to date to the period c 1075-1250, although one must date after c 1170 (Context 1005). Most of these earlier contexts contain sherds of Cotswold-type ware (OXAC, from c 900 but mainly c 1050-1250 at Oxford) and many also contain Medieval Oxford ware (OXY, c 1075-1300). The association of these two in the same contexts and the absence of glazed Brill/Boarstall ware (OXAM, common in Oxford after c 1225) suggests a cut-off date for medieval activity here by c 1250 if not slightly earlier. A single sherd of East Wiltshire/Newbury B ware (OXAQ) in Context 1005 should date to c 1170-1350 but need not be much later than the rest of the medieval assemblage. The absence of roof tile from these contexts (from c 1175+) also suggests an early date. Nearly all the (early) medieval sherds here appear to be from cooking pots and several large fresh rims and typical sagging bases with sooting marks are present. A narrow diameter rim in OXAC might be from a small jar or a spouted pitcher for serving liquids (context 1005). Three sherds of yellow-glazed OXY come from large jugs or pitchers. A solitary sherd in Context (1020) comes from the shoulder of a jar/cooking pot decorated with horizontal bands of square rouletting. This might be an example of Wallingford ware (Fabric WA38) which is rare from Oxford sites. The fabric is very similar to OXY and the dating is also similar. Three sherds of late Saxon or Saxo-Norman wares are also present but these appear to be residual in their contexts. Probably the earliest of these is a surprisingly large/fresh rim sherd from a cooking pot in Late Saxon Oxford shelly wares (OXB, c 775-1050). This occurred as a residual element in a post-medieval context (1052) - a large pit that may have been dug into a late Saxon layer. Two fairly small sherds of St Neot's-type ware (OXR, c 850-1100) occur in medieval contexts (1007) and (1011) but are probably residual in these. It is fairly usual to find one or two sherds of



residual late Saxon pottery on sites along the High Street as evidence of late Saxon occupation is well attested from several sites in this area.

B.1.4 There appears to be a complete absence of pottery between the period c 1250-1600, and then a relatively large contemporary 17th-century pottery group represented by the contexts described as follows. All of the post-medieval assemblage (54 sherds) came from a single feature (1044 / 1052). Apart from a single late Saxon rim sherd (OXB), fill 1044/1052 produced only large fresh sherds - including a few complete profiles - from at least 20 contemporary early post-medieval vessels which most probably date to the period c 1620-1650. The majority of vessels are in post-medieval glazed red earthenware (PMR). This only became common in Oxford after c 1625 when the Brill/Boarstall ware tradition (OXAM, c1225-1625) ceased to supply the town with pale-firing green-glazed medieval-style vessels. The latter tradition is completely absent from the assemblage here. The character of the PMR forms is early and compares well with other early-to-mid 17th-century assemblages from Oxford, particularly St Ebbe's (Mellor and Oakley 1984). Common domestic forms associated either with cooking, storage or the serving of food are present. These include several bowls of various sizes, storage jars, tripod jars (pipkins) and tripod bowls (skillets), a probable jug and a black-glazed barrel-shaped mug. The most unusual PMR form is a complete profile of a small pear-shaped vessel (see photo) with a reduced (over-fired?) dark grey fabric and a black or dark green glaze. This resembles a mug or narrow jug in form but the unusually narrow and inward-sloping rim (diam. 40mm.) suggest a more specialised function - possibly a flower vase or a measure? No parallel for this form appears to exist in Oxford assemblages of this period and it is certainly very unusual. As the vessel is incomplete it is uncertain whether or not it once had a handle. Non-PMR vessels from this context include a complete profile of an attractive green-glazed Surrey/Hampshire whiteware dish (BORDG) and sherds from two jugs in German Frechen stoneware (FREC) - one with a moulded base datable before c 1630. A single piece of clay pipe stem from this context is of broadly 17th-century date. The fact that so little clay pipe was found here might also suggest a relatively early date for this context as clay pipes are not very common in Oxford before the middle of the 17th century.

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
1005	c1170-1250	26	426	1x bs (body sherd) OXAQ. 5x OXY cookpot incl 2 rims - 1 with hooked/clubbed rimform c1150+. 21x OXAC incl large fresh sherds & some worn, incl 3x cookpot rims (1 thumbbed) incl 1 upright with small diam c100mm - poss from a spouted pitcher?
1007	c1050-1250	3	45	2x OXAC incl rim from unusual straight-sided jar (diam c180mm) with squared/lid-seated rim - poss a Late Saxon type? 1x worn ?flat base sherd St Neot's ware
1011	c1050-1250	16	367	All OXAC apart from 1 bs fairly fresh St Neot's ware - sooted ext. OXAC incl large fresh sherds incl 5 rims from 4 cookpots, 2 with thumbbed rims
1012	c1075-1250	14	242	8x fresh OXY incl 2 bss from glazed pitcher & fresh cspot rim. 6x OXAC incl large fresh joining sherds & 1 cspot rim
1020	c1025-1250?	1	13	Bs from shoulder of wheel-thrown jar in light grey-brown sandyware with dark grey surfaces. Ext decorated with horiz bands of square rouletting. Superficially like OXY but dec atypical and fabric seem more 'open'. Poss Wallingford ware (WA38)? C1025-1275 (see OXTURBR - Turl Bar, High Street). Less likely a Continental import?



Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
1039	c775-1050	1		Small but identifiable sherd of Late Saxon Oxford shelly ware (Fabric OXB) retrieved from soil sample residue
1044	c1620-1650?	5	532	3x early PMR incl joining sherds from large conical bowl with thickened/flanged rim & int amber glaze. Rim poss thickening towards a pouring lip (cf St Ebbes: Mellor 1984, fig.19.12). 1x broad flanged dish rim - brown discoloured fabric with dull brown glaze. JOINS (1052). 1x bs OXY
1045	c1050-1250	1	59	Large fresh rim sherd OXAC cookpot with flaring rim with int bead. Sooted
1046	c1075-1250	2	39	Large fresh bs OXY glazed pitcher. Cookpot base OXAC
1047	c1075-1250	7	143	1x bs OXY cpot. Rest OXAC incl 2x fresh cookpot rims - 1 with triangular rim & near-straight sides
1052	c1620-1650?	49	6506	JOINS (1044) Several complete vessel profiles & large fresh sherds. Minimum 20 vessels (mainly based on rims). Mostly PMR. Also includes 1x profile BORDG conical dish with flanged rim c 40% complete (diam 220mm). 2x FREC (2 vess) incl moulded jug base (pre-1630?) & bs. 1x jar rim Late Saxon Oxford shelly ware (OXB c 800-1050) fresh, black, with thickened/squared rim prob finished on turntable or wheel (diam 160mm: form as Mellor 1994, fig. 6.12-13). PMR (16 vess) incl profile of v unusual small jug/vase with pear-shaped body & conical upper part with plain rim flush with sides - like a v narrow tankard or mug with pad base (Ht 107mm, rim diam c40mm, base diam 58mm) paired horiz grooves on shoulder & below rim, reduc dark grey fabric with red core & dark green/black glaze upper half ext. 1x Lower half barrel-shaped mug with handle (c1590-1630?) with grooved dec, black/dk green glaze. 2x shallow tripod skillets (bowls) incl profile & side rod handle. Smallish pipkin rim/handle & bss. Bases of 1 (or 2?) larger tripod pipkins. Globular body & pad base small jug or large moneybox? Profile dish/bowl with flanged rim & 3 deep grooves as dec on flange, yellowish glz. 2x wide bowls incl profile (JOINS 1044) w complete base. 1x deep curved wall bowl profile w groove dec under rim (cf St Ebbes: Mellor 1984, fig. 20.3). 5 x large ?storage jars w int glaze incl complete flat base & near profileCont'd below:
TOTAL		125	8372	



B.2 Clay pipe

by John Cotter

Introduction and methodology

- B.2.1 A single piece of clay pipe weighing 8g. was recovered from Context (1052). This has not been separately catalogued but is fully described here. The piece is a stem fragment (55mm. long) in fairly fresh condition though with some brown staining. It is from a thick-stemmed early pipe with a stem bore of c 3mm. These characteristics suggest a broad 17th-century date.

B.3 Ceramic building material

by John Cotter

- B.3.1 Five pieces of CBM weighing 578g. were recovered from two contexts. This was examined and spot-dated in a similar way to the pottery. As usual, the dating of broken fragments of ceramic or other building materials is an imprecise art and spot-dates derived from them are necessarily broad and should therefore be regarded with caution.
- B.3.2 The five pieces come from just two items of roof furniture in two post-medieval contexts (1044 and 1052). Those from (1044) include two joining pieces from a thick unglazed 13th-14th century roof or ridge tile edge which exhibits wear. In addition three large fresh joining sherds from the same early post-medieval ridge tile were also found in these contexts (mostly in 1052). This represents the upper end and side fragments (but not the apex) of an inverted roughly 'V'-shaped tile with a fairly fine post-medieval red earthenware (PMR) fabric with a clear dark brown glaze along the top. It is considerably thinner and finer than medieval ridge tiles which are much commoner in Oxford than post-medieval examples. The association with closely dated pottery of c 1620-1650 is useful in fixing the development of post-medieval ridge tiles in Oxford as very few examples from dated contexts are known.

B.4 Metalwork

by Leigh Allen

- B.4.1 A total of 16 iron objects were recovered from the excavation, the objects are in very poor condition, fragmentary and highly corroded. All appear to be nails or fragments from nail shanks. Four near complete nails and 4 shank fragments came from pit fill 1007, a re-deposited layer in a post-medieval well construction cut. A further fragment came from context 1044, a post-Medieval well backfill. Four shank fragments were recovered from context 1036, the fill of a possible Saxon cellar pit.

B.5 Stone

by Ruth Shaffrey

- B.5.1 A single piece of worked stone was recovered from fill 1036 of a possible Saxon cellar pit. The stone is a fragment of neatly-pecked lower rotary quern, 490mm in diameter,



31mm thick and 845g in weight. It is made of a fine-grained sandstone, possibly Pennant sandstone. The quern could be Roman in origin, although the unworn nature of the grinding surface indicates it was not well used as a quern before it broke and was reused here.

B.6 Animal bone

by Rebecca Nicholson

Introduction and methodology

B.6.1 The animal bone reported here comprised 273 fragments weighing 4.6kg. It was recovered from features excavated along one of the principal street frontages of the Late Saxon and medieval town. The bone was largely hand recovered and is in good condition, with complete bones present and minimal gnawing; however, the majority of bones were recovered from medieval and post-medieval contexts. The remaining smaller assemblage derives from the fills of the possible late Saxon cellar pit (context 1039). Given the small size of these assemblages full recording was not considered appropriate. Consequently the bone assemblages have been scanned for unusual taxa, pathologies and butchery, but have not been not fully recorded.

The assemblage

- B.6.2 Bone from the possible late Saxon cellar pit fills 1036 and 1039 includes only indeterminate fragments, one of which is calcined.
- B.6.3 Medieval pit fill 1012, from pit 1013 included 59 fragments of bone (854g) from cattle, sheep/goat and pig as well as a carpometacarpus from a large goose (greylag or domestic goose). A pig proximal femur (unfused) has been perforated towards the proximal end of the shaft, probably for marrow removal and a pig radius has a chop mark to the medial aspect directly below the proximal epiphysis, typically resulting from carcass dismemberment. A medium mammal (probably sheep/goat) vertebra has been chopped through the sagittal plane, an indication carcass division into sides. A soil sample processed to 0.5mm from pit fill 1007 produced bones from a young lamb and a small cat as well as domestic/greylag goose, domestic fowl (including Bantam) and a small galliforme, possibly quail, as well as bones from cattle, sheep/goat and pig.
- B.6.4 Four bone fragments (281g) came from medieval pit fill 1020 from pit 1010. Bones included a complete, fused, cattle metacarpal, an almost complete sub-adult pig mandible and a cattle axis fragment.
- B.6.5 Medieval pit fill context 1047 (9 fragments, 244g) included a complete, fused, cattle metacarpal and a calcaneus together with the majority of a sheep/goat tibia and sheep horncore. Contemporary pit fill context 1045 (6 fragments, 281g) included a large cattle metacarpal which has clearly been worked into a partial point at the distal end and squared off by chopping at the proximal end (lateral and medial aspects). It was probably intended to be a bone skate, although why it was abandoned unfinished is unclear. The metacarpal was significantly broader and more 'robust', than others from this site and is probably from a bull or an ox. A distal fragment of cattle radius and fragment of sheep/goat calcaneus also came from this pit fill.



- B.6.6 Pit fill 1011 included 33 bones (612g) a significant proportion of which are from cattle lower limbs and feet (metacarpal, astragali and calcanea) . Three astragali had been chopped through and a navicular cuboid has evidence of osteoarthritis on the distal facet. Material in this fill has been spot dated to c1050-1250.
- B.6.7 Pit fill 1005, spot dated to c1170-1250, includes a coracoid from a large duck (probably domestic) in addition to bones from cattle, sheep and pig, several of which are complete and measureable and/or ageable. A fragment of red deer antler has been chopped and was presumably intended for working. The remaining 143 fragments (1.8kg) derive from domestic mammals (largely cattle, sheep and pig) and are typical of general butchery waste
- B.6.8 Post-medieval well back-fill 1044/1052, spot dated to c1620-1650, included a calf scapula which had a rough rectilinear hole cut through the blade, having been cut by making a series of more or less straight cuts through from the medial side of the scapula. It is likely that this was done in order to suspend all or part of the forelimb, probably to smoke or cure a joint of veal. Similar examples are described from York (O'Connor 1988). It also included a complete, fused, cattle metacarpal and calcaneus.

Appendix C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental samples

By Julia Meen and Sheila Boardman

Introduction

- C.1.1 Six environmental samples were taken during excavations at 6-7 High Street, Oxford, in June 2012, for the recovery of charred plant remains, and for bones and artefacts. Sample 1001 was taken from context (1007), the fill of a post medieval well construction cut which cut through medieval pits and which contained redeposited medieval material given a spot date of c. 1050-1250. Samples 1003, 1004 and 1005 were taken from contexts (1036), (1039) and (1040) respectively, and were all fills of a possible Saxon cellar pit, with (1040) being a thin layer of dark sediment between contexts (1039) and (1041). Sample 1006 was also taken from context (1036), where the context forms the fill of a posthole cut into the basal layers of the cellar pit. Sample 1007 was from context (1041), the basal layer of the Saxon cellar pit.

Methodology

- C.1.2 Sample 1000 was processed by water flotation using a modified Siraf style flotation machine. The remaining five samples were all processed using hand flotation. All flots were collected on a 250µm mesh and the heavy residues sieved to 500µm, after which both flots and residues were dried in a heated room. The residues were sorted by eye for artefacts and ecofactual remains. The flots were assessed for their potential for charred plant remains using a binocular microscope at approximately x15 magnification.
- C.1.3 Following assessment of the six flots (Meen and Boardman, 2012), it was decided that full analysis and reporting should be carried out on sample 1004, from fill 1039 of the Saxon cellar pit. In addition, it was recommended that samples 1005 and 1006, which come from Saxon cellar fills overlying sample 1004, should be briefly scanned and presence/absence of charred plant foods described. Identifications were made with



reference to published guides and the comparative seed collection held at OAS. Plant nomenclature follows Stace (2010).

Results

- C.1.4 Table 1 shows the composition of samples 1004, 1005 and 1006. Sample 1004 produced was fully sorted. 23 cereal grains were identified as wheat. Of these, nine were identified as free-threshing wheat, probably bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) or rivet wheat (*T. turgidum*). The remainder were not identified beyond *Triticum* sp., largely due to poor preservation (or adhering material). Three wheat grains were fused together. These, and a few of the other grains, have higher dorsal ridges and/or are more tapered towards their apices, suggesting they may be from a glume wheat such as emmer (*T. dicoccum*) or spelt (*T. spelta*). There was no glume wheat chaff in these samples to confirm the presence of either of these species.
- C.1.5 A small number of grains of hulled barley (*Hordeum* sp.) were recorded, including one 'twisted' grain suggestive of six-rowed barley (*H. vulgare*). A single grain was identified as either wheat or rye (*Triticum/Secale*), and part of an oat (*Avena* sp.) grain was also present. There was no quantifiable cereal chaff which could be identified to species in these samples. A fragment of a large legume (*Fabaceae*) and a complete small (<2mm) legume were present. Seeds of wild plant species consisted of a single charred seed of dock (*Rumex* sp.), two examples of the *Chenopodiaceae* family, two fragments of *Caryophyllaceae* type seeds, and a medium grass (*Poaceae*) seed.



Sample	1005	1004	1006
Context	1040	1039	1036
Volume (L)	1	5	8
Cereal grains			
<i>Triticum aestivum/turgidum</i>	*	9	**
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	*	14	**
<i>Triticum/Secale</i> sp.		1	
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.		6	*
<i>Avena</i> sp.		1 (apical end)	
cf. <i>Avena</i> sp.	*		
Indeterminate cereal grains	*	14 (3F)	*
Cereal chaff			
<i>Triticum</i> sp. rachis		1F	
<i>Avena</i> sp. lemma		1F	
Cereal/large grass culm node	*		
Weed/Wild Species			
Fabaceae (4mm)		1F	
Fabaceae (2mm)		1	
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus/Pisum</i> (5mm)	*		
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> (>2mm)			*
<i>Rumex</i> sp.		1	
Caryophyllaceae		2F	
Chenopodiaceae		2	
Poaceae (medium)		1F (non-embryo end)	
Indeterminate weed seeds		2	
Indeterminate nutshell		1F	

- C.1.6 Sample 1005 was scanned to establish the presence/absence of charred plant species. A low number of grains of wheat (*Triticum* sp.) were noted, with occasional examples identified as free-threshing wheat (*T. aestivum/turgidum*). A possible oat grain (cf. *Avena* sp.) and a large (5mm) vetch/pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus/Pisum* sp.) were present.
- C.1.7 Sample 1006 was similarly scanned. It contained a moderate number of wheat grains, many of which could be identified as free-threshing wheat (*T. aestivum/turgidum*). Two examples of hulled barley were noted, both of which have a 'twisted' appearance and are from the six-rowed species (*Hordeum vulgare*). A small (<2mm) vetch/pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.) was also present.

Discussion

- C.1.8 All three of the analysed samples were dominated by cereal grain, with tiny quantities of (non diagnostic) chaff, and a few legumes and weed seeds. The main cereal was wheat, with smaller quantities of barley, isolated occurrences of oat and a possible example of rye. The wheat grains that could be identified to species appear to be bread wheat or rivet wheat. Bread wheat was the dominant wheat cultivated in Southern England during the Saxon period (Pelling and Robinson 2000; Pelling 2008), but rivet wheat straw was a very important thatching material and it is possible that some rivet



wheat grains arrived in the Saxon settlement in this way. Elsewhere in the Thames valley, Saxon-period emmer wheat has been clearly identified and it has been suggested that emmer was reintroduced into the region during the Saxon period by settlers coming from Germany, where emmer was still commonly cultivated (Pelling and Robinson 2000). The barley is of hulled type, with examples of 'twisted' grains noted in two of the samples. This characteristic is indicative of these being the side grains of six-rowed barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), although it is known for two-rowed and six-row varieties to be grown side-by-side (K. Hunter pers. Comm.), so both varieties may be present. The small quantity of oat did not include any diagnostic chaff fragments which might have confirmed whether the oats were from the cultivated species (*Avena sativa*), wild species (e.g. *A. fatua*) or both. Some medium or smaller grains of vetch/tare/pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus/Pisum*) and vetch/tare (*Vicia/Lathyrus*) may point to additional cultivated species and/or weeds of cultivation. Seeds of wild taxa were very few in number, poorly preserved and do not provide evidence for the conditions of cultivation or areas utilised.

- C.1.9 The Oxford High Street samples can be compared to Late Saxon charred plant remains recovered from Oxford Castle (Pelling 2008). Across all areas of the latter site, cereal grains dominated the samples, with wheat and barley the principal crops. The low numbers of impurities suggest grain crops were imported into the Castle (and probably the Saxon settlement) in fully processed form, with only occasional chaff fragments, weed seeds and pulses remaining. Many of the charred deposits were interpreted as dumps of material which had become accidentally charred during parching of the crop before milling. Occasional examples of oat and rye were also recorded at the Castle site, with their low numbers possibly reflecting their differing uses rather than their economic importance (Pelling 2008).
- C.1.10 The origins of the three samples from Oxford High Street, all from cellar pit layers, their lack of impurities and generally homogeneous composition, again suggests a series of small scale dumping episodes, which appears to be borne out by the other refuse-type material, including mammal bone, in these samples. Larger sized samples collected in future excavations (where conditions allow) may enable a fuller range of species and plant parts to be identified and more concrete conclusions about Saxon period agriculture in the Oxford region to be drawn.



Appendix D. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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Appendix E. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 6-7 High Street, Oxford

Site code: OXHIGH 12

Grid reference: SP 514 062

Type: Excavation

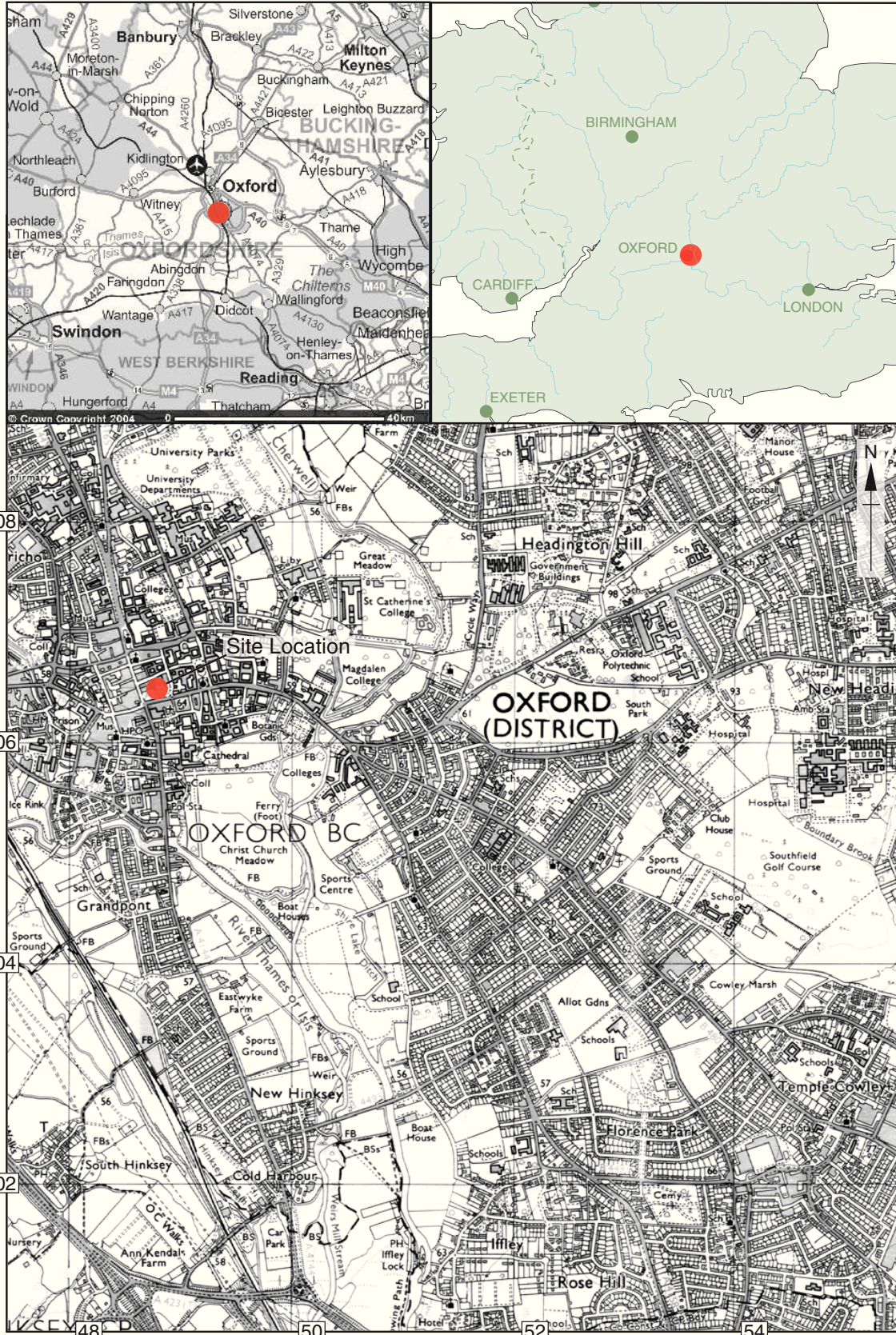
Date and duration: June 2012

Area of site: 2.55m x 2.30m

Summary of results: A possible late Saxon cellar pit was recorded which had been truncated by later pits.

A series of medieval pits and two wells were also present, dating to the early medieval period. One of the two wells appears to have remained in use for a considerable period of time and was finally backfilled in the period AD 1620-1650.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2012.35.



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Figure 1: Site location

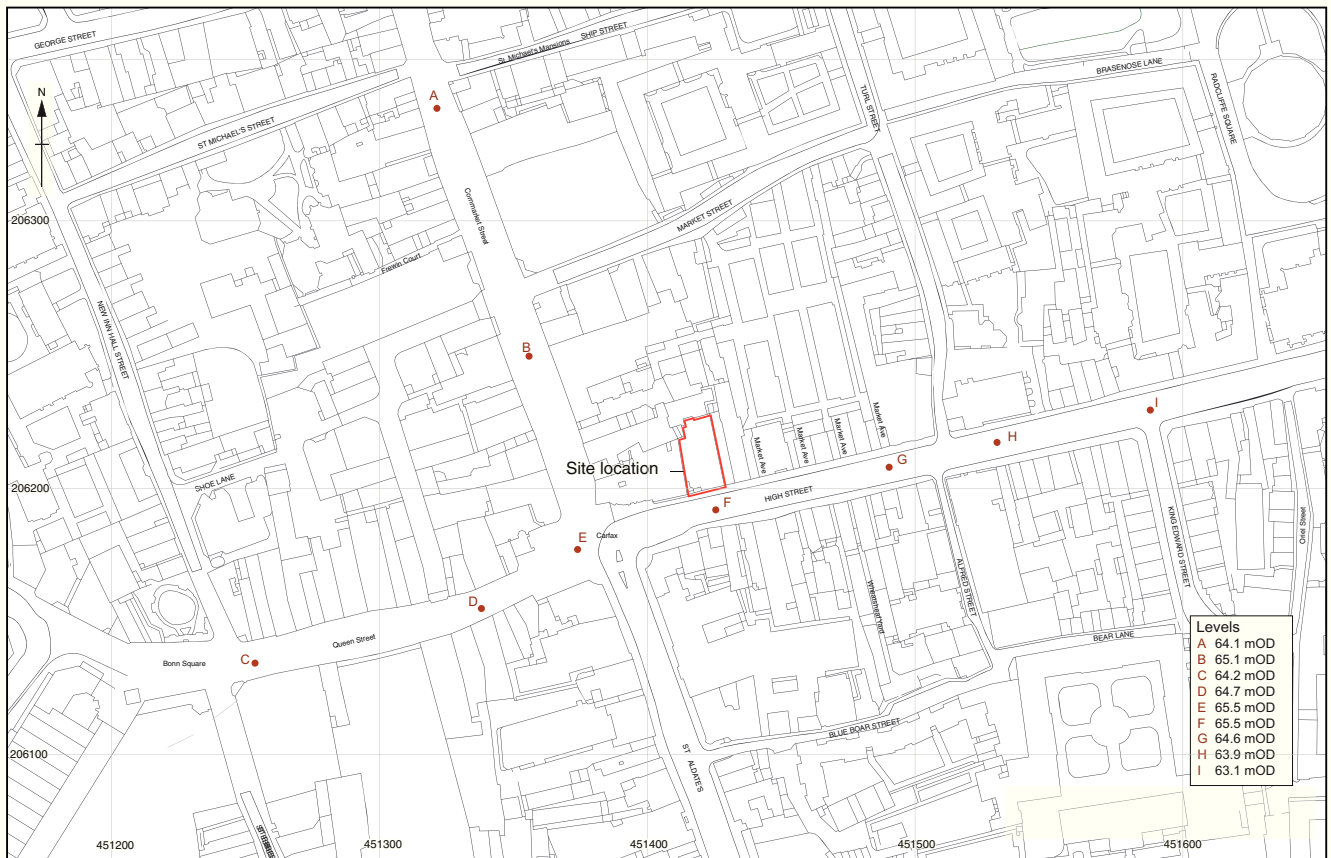
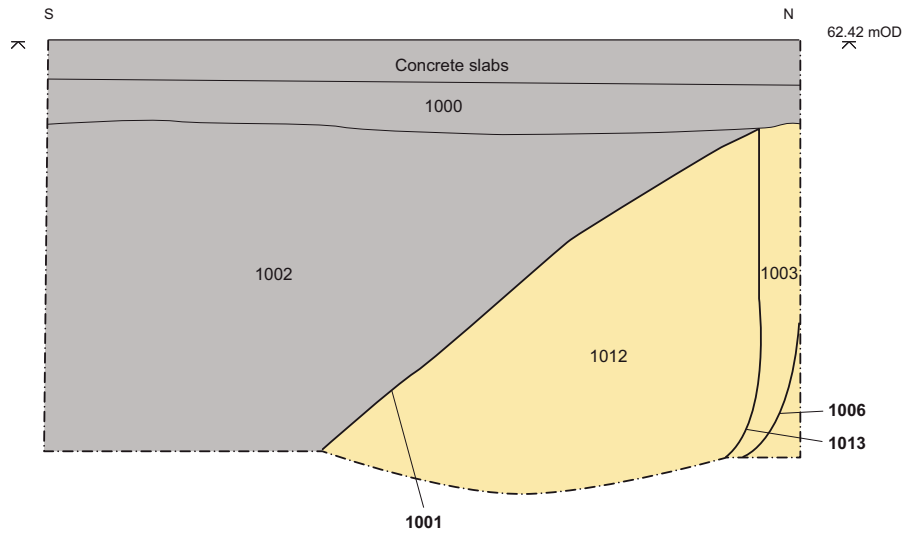


Figure 2: Location plan

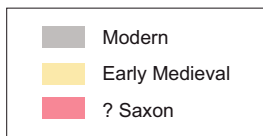
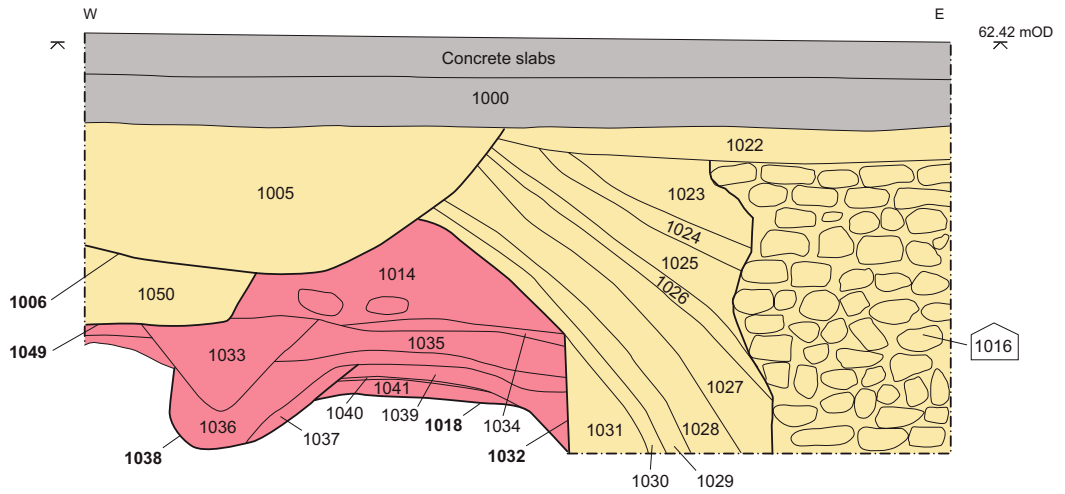


Figure 3: Test pit location plan

Section 1000



Section 1001



Figures 4: Sections 1000 and 1001



Figures 5: Unusual post-medieval redware vessel - perhaps a flower vase or measure



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