



Drayson Hall Stowe School Buckinghamshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

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OA Job N^o: 1293

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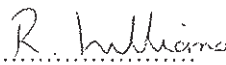
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Drayson Hall, Stowe School, Buckinghamshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In July 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Drayson Hall, Stowe School, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 6700 3750). The work was commissioned by Stowe School in advance of the construction of a new extension to the rear of the school buildings. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features or deposits during the ground reduction.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In July 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Drayson Hall, Stowe School, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Stowe School in respect of a planning application for new extension on the rear school building (Planning Application No.01/2672).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Sandy Kidd, Senior Archaeological Officer for Buckinghamshire.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on cornbrash within the School grounds, which are generally level, at approximately 130 m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2002) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The earliest known human activity within the study area dates to the Roman period and a Roman villa of early 4th century date lies c 500 m north-west of the Site. The main Towcester to Alchester Roman Road runs south-west/north-east c 200 m to the west and the Fenny Stratford to Buckingham road, lies immediately to the north of the site on a south-east/north-west alignment.
- 1.3.3 Roman pottery kilns were uncovered nearby in the early 1990s (Marshall 1999, Booth 1999). Part of a pottery kiln was salvage recorded in 1990, and further indications of a kiln were noted in 1995. Among the artefacts recovered was a quantity of pink-grogged ware from both kiln locations. This material dates from the 2nd-4th centuries (Booth and Green, 1989), and similar material has been found by the National Trust's archaeologists during ground disturbance in and around the gardens of Stowe Park. A Saxon relic has been found by the gardeners at Stowe.
- 1.3.4 Domesday records four manors, which are likely to have represented the pre-conquest settlements within the area. In the early medieval period these settlements

became nucleated around a church and manor house. The four manors recorded in Domesday comprise Stowe, Boycott, Lamport and Dadford (of which the latter two were divided into two holdings each).

- 1.3.5 Recorded as *Stov* in Domesday, it was leased from the Bishop of Bayeux by Robert d'Oilly and Roger of Ivry in 1086. In the 13th century it was granted to Osney Abbey (Oxfordshire), who held it until the dissolution. It was eventually granted to Queen Elizabeth, who proceeded to grant it to Thomas Wright in 1590. In 1591 the manor of Stowe was sold to the Temple family, who had made their money from sheep farming.
- 1.3.6 The mansion, which stands in the Grade I listed registered park at Stowe dates originally to the 16th/17th centuries, and was remodelled in the 18th century. The original manor house was demolished and replaced by Sir Richard Temple before his death in 1697. Later his son (the first Lord Cobham) re-built the front and added the wings. The house was further enlarged by Earl Temple, who died in 1779 and afterwards by the Marquis of Buckinghamshire. During this time, the Temple family had begun to invest heavily in the gardens. The first Lord Cobham, who died in 1749, had started to extend the area of parkland (which had been present as a deer park from the 13th century). By the end of the 1720's due to the ever expanding Stowe Park, the village of Stowe, which in 1712 had 31 houses, had been largely cleared, leaving only the 13th century church of the Assumption of St. Mary the Virgin.
- 1.3.7 The land within Stowe Manor became an extensive, complex pleasure garden, surrounding a country mansion, probably one of the finest examples of later Renaissance houses in England. Worked on by a number of famous landscape designers, including Charles Bridgeman and Capability Brown, by the 18th century it was supremely influential to English landscape gardening. At its largest the designed landscape and woodlands covered some 250 hectares.
- 1.3.8 Notable post-medieval structures in the grounds include Conduit House and the Bourbon Tower, both probably of 18th century date.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The work was carried out using a 360⁰ machine reducing the ground level into the slope of the hill at the rear of the school. This varied in depth from 2 – 4 m into the hillside.

- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The work consisted of removing a 0.2 - 0.4 m thick layer of greyish brown clay topsoil, which overlay a natural of orange clay with patches of flint. This had been disturbed by tree roots from the woodland which had been removed prior to the development.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered from the site during the watching brief.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No environmental samples were taken during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief exposed no archaeological features or deposits on the site. The only features were root holes from the woodland previously on the site.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.2 – 0.4 m			Topsoil	
2	Natural				Clay natural	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition, ed. D Wilkinson)

OA, 2002 *Extension to Drayson Hall, Stowe School, Buckinghamshire* Written Scheme of Investigation

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Drayson Hall, Stowe School, Buckinghamshire

Site code: STODH 02

Grid reference: NGR SP 6700 3750

Type of watching brief: Ground work for new extension at rear of school.

Date and duration of project: One site visit on the 17.07.2002

Area of site: 18 m x 32 m

Summary of results: No archaeological features or deposits were found during the ground reduction.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM 2002.46

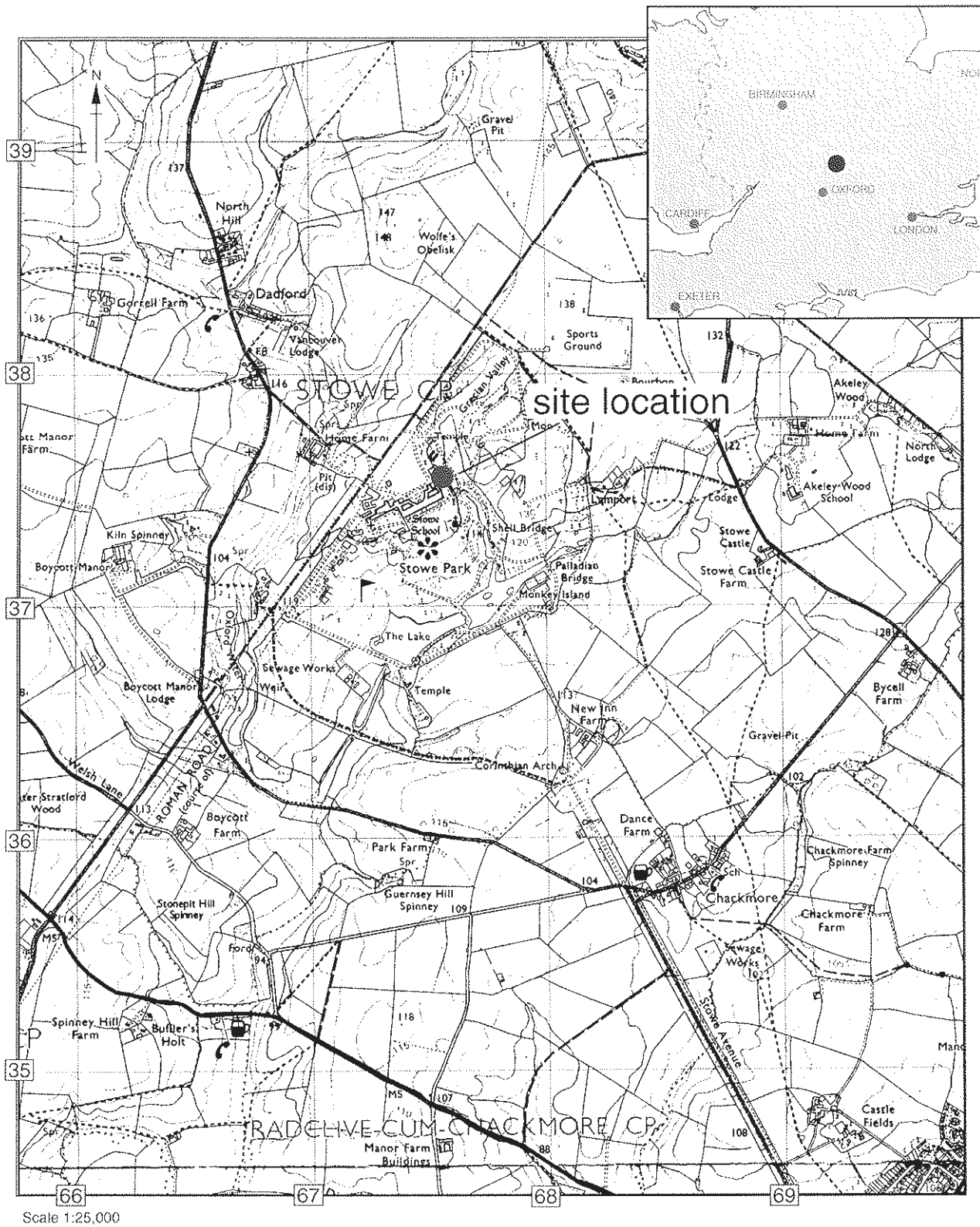
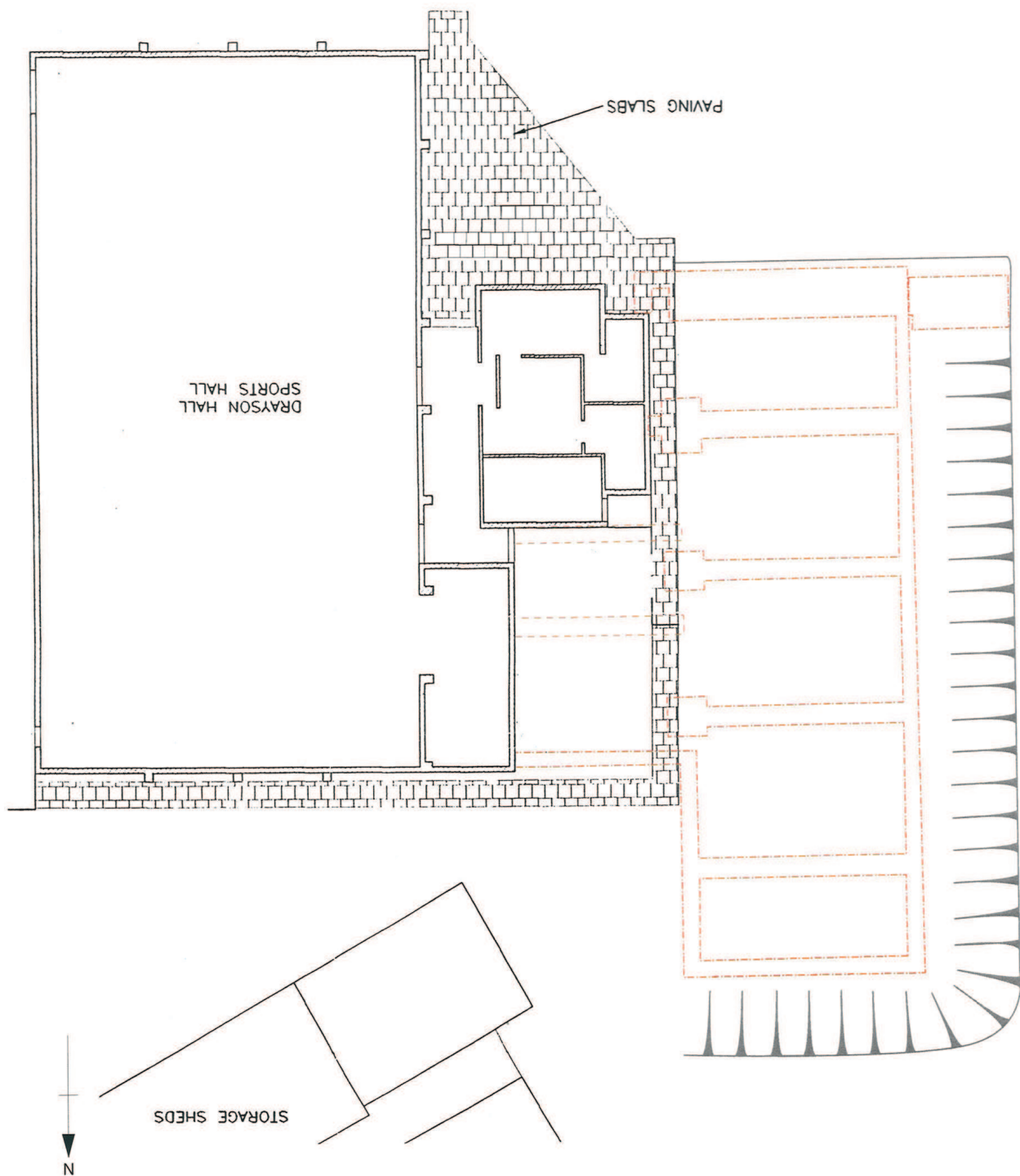


Figure 1: Site location.



0 10m 1:200 Approx

Figure 2 Site Plan and Foundation.



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