

Bowood House Hotel
238 Oxford Road
Kidlington
Oxfordshire



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



January 2007

Client: J.A.Pye (Oxford) Ltd

Issue N^o: 1
OA Job N^o: 3456
Planning Ref N^o: 06/01187/F
NGR: SP 4962 1297

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238 Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*****CONTENTS**

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SUMMARY

In January 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the site of the Former Bowood House Hotel, 238 Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 4962 1297). The work was commissioned by J. A. Pye (Oxford) Ltd in advance of the demolition of the hotel buildings and construction of 21 new flats. The watching brief revealed that the construction of the hotel buildings and car park had severely truncated the development area, leaving only small isolated areas of undisturbed stratigraphy. No significant archaeology was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In January 2007 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 238 Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 4962 1297). The work was commissioned by J. A. Pye (Oxford) Ltd in respect of a planning application for the demolition of existing hotel buildings and the construction of 21 new flats (Planning Application No. 06/01187/F).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Paul Smith, the County Archaeological Officer, requiring that a watching brief be undertaken as part of the planning consent (OCAS, 2006).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2006).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 Kidlington is located 3.5 km north of Oxford, while the development site is situated to the south of Kidlington, on the west side of the Oxford Road and to the east of the Oxford Canal (Fig.1). The sites slopes down from 64.8 m OD at its highest point adjacent to Oxford Road to 62.5 m at the western edge of the site. The development area measures *c* 0.2 of a hectare and was originally in use as a hotel and car park. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay and Kellaway Beds (British Geological Survey, sheet no 219).

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, 2006) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The development site lies to the south of the medieval core of the village, in a area of archaeological potential. Less than 500 m to the south-west excavations revealed a possible Neolithic enclosure and associated finds (PRN 15811, NGR: SP 4930 1259). Iron Age field systems have been identified to the south of Kidlington (PRN 15098, NGR: SP 4885 1210) and further evidence of prehistoric and later settlement has

been recorded from excavations and cropmarks to the west (PRN 2371, NGR: SP 4824 1317). Although no finds or sites are recorded for the proposal area itself, it is in an area that has had little previous modern disturbance and therefore there is a possibility of encountering medieval or earlier archaeology during the groundworks.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological deposits or features that may be disturbed or destroyed during the course of the groundworks.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted in the form of site visits after the demolition of the hotel and during the commencement of ground works.
- 2.2.2 A plan of the site was produced at a scale of 1:250 and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. The excavations and any recorded sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The underlying natural geology, a grey-yellow clay (4) was encountered throughout the site. Around the western edge of the original buildings footprint this was directly overlaid by a 0.15 m thick layer of dark grey-brown clay loam (5) (Fig. 3, section 1), a probable landscaping layer.
- 3.1.2 Within the central and eastern areas of the site the hotel buildings and car park had been constructed directly upon the natural clay suggesting that the area had been truncated prior to the original construction.
- 3.1.3 Within the north-east and south-east corners of the site, alongside Oxford Road, the ground had been built up (Fig. 3, section 2). The underlying natural clay (4) was encountered approximately 0.7 m below the level of Oxford Road. This was overlaid by a 0.25 m thick layer of yellow-brown sandy clay (3), a probable layer of alluvium. Overlying this was a 0.17 m deep layer of grey-brown clay silt (2), probably a buried soil horizon. This was sealed below a 0.3 m thick layer of light grey-brown clay silt (1), containing lenses of modern construction debris.

3.2 **Finds**

3.2.1 No dating evidence was recovered during the course of the watching brief.

3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

4.1.1 The watching brief showed that within the area of the footprint of the hotel buildings and the car park the ground had been subject to severe truncation during the construction of the hotel. No evidence for truncated features was observed with this area, although it is not known if this can be attributed to the absence of archaeology, or to the degree of truncation.

4.1.2 The areas of surviving stratigraphy were sited either side of the hotel's driveway, adjacent to Oxford Road. These showed a layer of alluvium sealing the natural clay and a buried soil horizon, probably the original ground surface overlying the alluvium. No dating evidence was recovered from this layer.

4.1.3 The absence of alluvium overlying the natural clay around the edges of the footprint suggest that these areas had also been truncated during the construction phase of the hotel and that the overlying topsoil is a modern landscaping layer. The current phase of construction had stripped away this topsoil, but no significant archaeology could be observed; as above it is not known if this is due to truncation or the absence of archaeology.

4.1.4 No significant archaeology was observed, or residual finds recovered during the course of the watching brief. The observed geology suggests that this area may have formed part of a flood plain in the past with the probability that little activity would have taken place, but the degree of truncation that has taken place during the construction of the hotel means that any conclusion is subjective.

APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.3 m	Modern made ground	-	C20th
2	Layer	0.17 m	Buried soil horizon	-	-
3	Layer	0.25 m	Alluvium	-	-
4	Layer	> 0.3 m	Natural clay	-	-
5	Layer	0.15 m	Modern landscaping layer	-	C20th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological watching Briefs*

OA 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)

OA 2006 *Bowood House Hotel, 238 Oxford Road, Kidlington: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

OCAS 2006 *Bowood House Hotel, 238 Oxford Road, Kidlington - Design Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Bowood House Hotel, 238 Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire

Site code: KIDBH06

Grid reference: SP 4962 1297

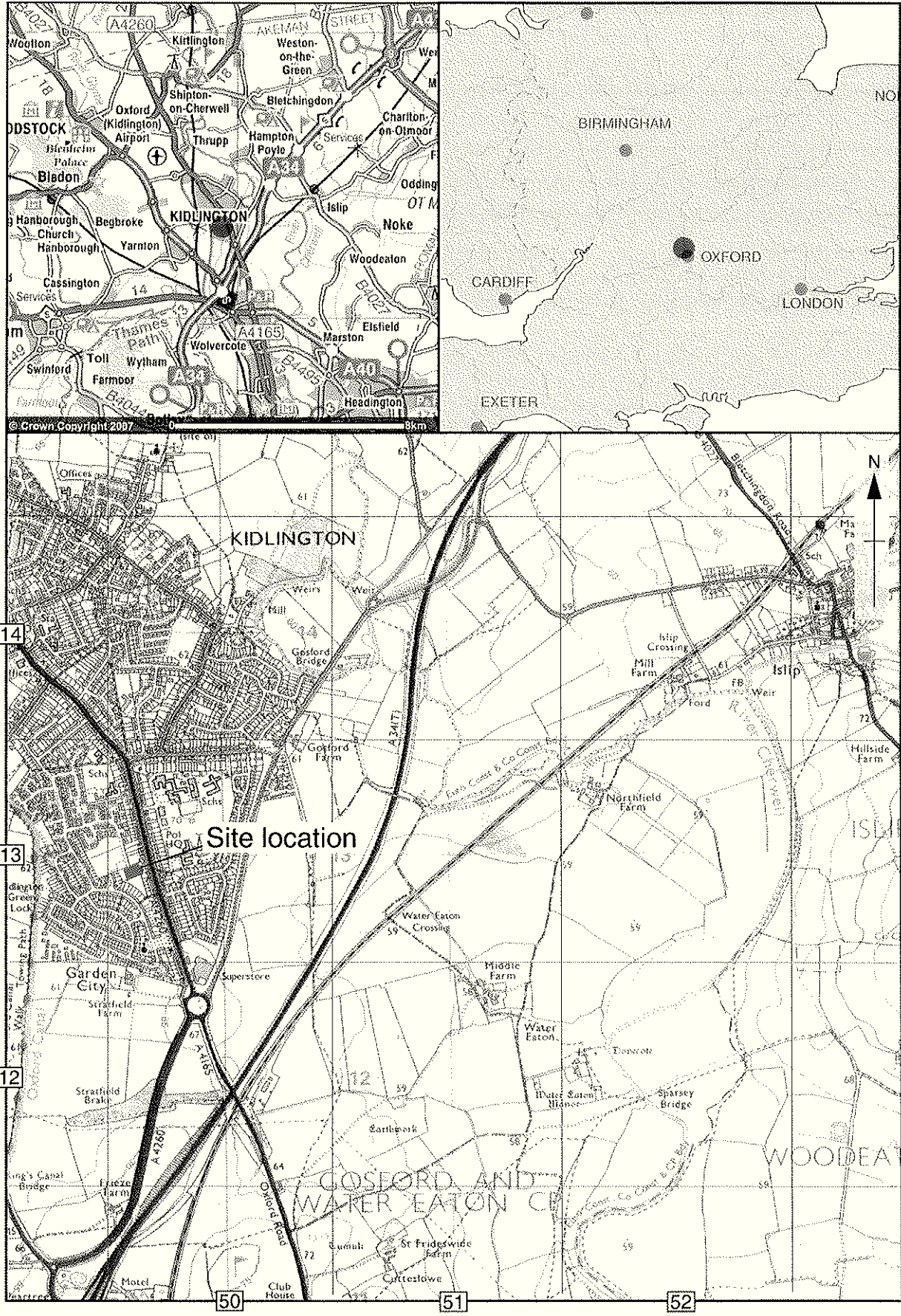
Type of watching brief: Demolition of existing buildings and groundworks associated with construction of 21 new flats

Date and duration of project: January 2007, 2 site visits

Area of site: 0.2 hectare

Summary of results: The watching brief showed that the majority of the site had been subject to severe truncation, no significant archaeology was observed within the remainder.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OCMS:2006.134



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Figure 1: Site location

Plan 1

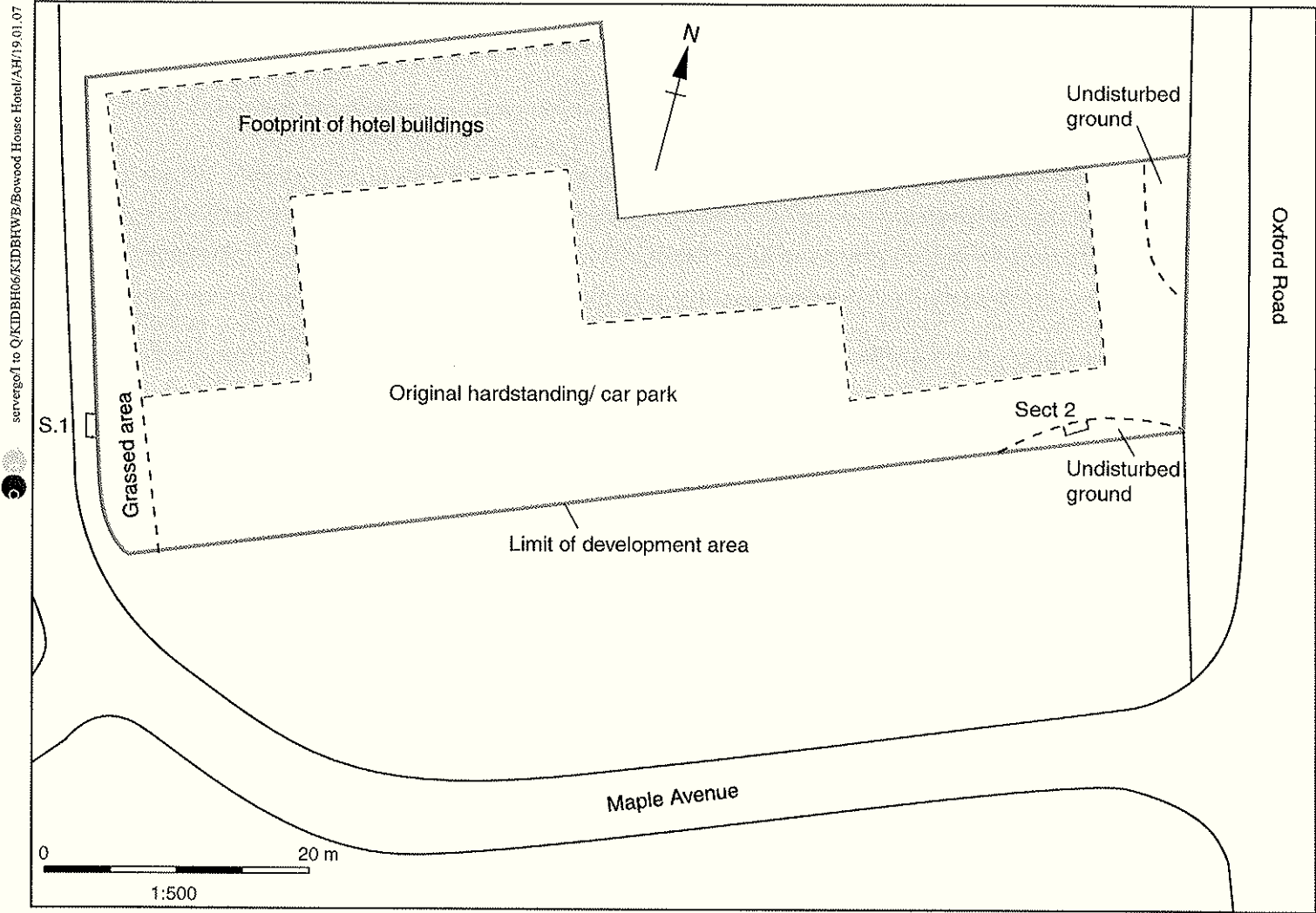


Figure 2 : Site plan

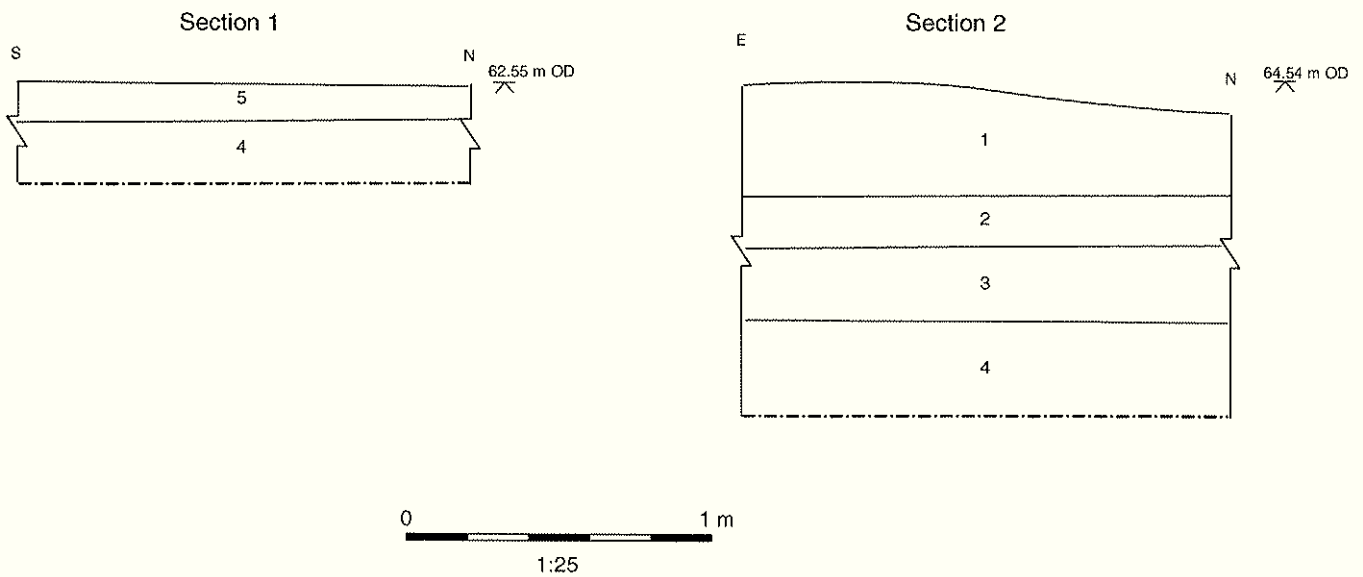


Figure 3 : Sections



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