

# St. David's Church Centre Moreton-in-Marsh Gloucestershire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



July 2008

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# St David's Church Centre, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*

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## SUMMARY

*In May and June 2008 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the St David's Church Centre, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 206 322). The work was commissioned by West Waddy ADP in advance of the partial demolition of existing buildings and the erection of new single storey extension (Planning Reference 07/03151/FUL). The watching brief revealed post-medieval made ground sealing the original topsoil horizon, raising the ground level by approximately 0.7 m. No significant archaeology was encountered.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In May and June 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the St David's Church Centre, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 206 322). The work was commissioned by West Waddy ADP in respect of a planning application for the partial demolition of existing buildings, erection of new single storey extension and external alterations (Planning Application No. 07/03151/FUL).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was agreed with Charles Parry, the Senior Archaeological Officer representing Gloucestershire County Council, and OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2008).

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The town of Moreton-in-Marsh is situated approximately 35 km north-east of Cheltenham (Fig. 1). The development site is located in the centre of the town within the area known as "Old Town". The centre is located on level ground adjacent to the churchyard of St David's Church at a level of approximately 135 m above OD. The site is bounded to the west by St David's Walk, to the south by the existing centre building and to the east and north by St David's School. The site occupies an area c500 m<sup>2</sup> and the underlying geology is glacial sand and gravel overlying Boulder Clay (Geological Survey of Great Britain sheet 217).

### 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, 2008) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The site is located within the historic core of Moreton-in-Marsh medieval town close by the Church of St David and as such the development had the potential to reveal archaeological deposits and/or finds relating to this period. There was also potential

for Romano-British deposits due to the site's location along the margins of the Fosse Way.

1.3.3 The High Street was subject to extensive redevelopment in the 18th century with the majority of the buildings within the High Street listed in Pevsner (1970, p.323) attributed to that date or later. Only the Curfew Tower on the corner of Oxford Street can be dated as earlier, with a probable construction date of the 16th century. The church of Saint David itself was extensively rebuilt in 1858.

1.3.4 Recent work in Moreton-in-Marsh by OA in 2006 at the Redsdale Arms in the High Street exposed post-medieval worked soils, possibly kitchen gardens relating to the hotel, overlying alluvium.

## 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 and archaeological deposits or features that may be disturbed or destroyed during the course of any intrusive groundworks.

2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during any works that were likely to impinge or disturb potential archaeological deposits. These works included the excavation of foundation and service trenches.

2.2.2 A plan showing the extent of any excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:100 and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavations, features and 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

#### *New Extension*

3.1.1 This consisted of approximately 14 m length of machine-dug trenching measuring 0.85 m wide by 1 m deep and located on the eastern edge of the site adjacent to the existing toilet block.

3.1.2 The underlying natural, a bright orange-brown silt clay alluvium with gravel lenses (7), was encountered at a depth of 0.9 m below the current ground level (Fig. 3,

Sections 1 and 2). This was sealed by a 0.13 m deep layer of grey-brown silt clay (6). This deposit had a high organic content and probably represents a buried soil horizon.

- 3.1.3 Overlying this was a layer of dark orange-brown clay (5), measuring 0.3 m deep at the northern extent of the site (Fig. 3, Section 1) decreasing to 0.2 m deep at the southern edge (Fig. 3, Section 2). This was overlaid by layer of orange brown silt clay (4), 0.13 m deep in the north rising to 0.4 m deep at the southern end of the site. Both these deposits represent layers of made ground.
- 3.1.4 At the northern extent of the site Layer 4 was overlain by a 0.1 m deep layer of olive-brown silt clay (3) containing charcoal flecking (Fig. 3, Section 1). This is probably also a layer of made ground but may represent a possible post-medieval worked soil. Overlying this was a 0.13 m deep layer of crushed stone (2), the hardcore base for the tarmac carpark surface (1).
- 3.1.5 Closer to the standing building layer 4 was overlaid by a 0.05 m deep layer of gravel (9) (Fig. 3, Section 2). This provided a base for the 0.05 m deep layer of cinders (8), which probably formed the original yard surface. As elsewhere on site this had been sealed by a 0.13 m deep continuation of the layer of crushed stone (2) and the tarmac surface (1).

#### *Trenching north of the centre*

- 3.1.6 At the western extent of this trench a layer of dark orange brown natural gravel (11) was encountered at a depth of 0.65 m below the current carpark level (Fig. 3, Section 4). This was overlaid by a layer of grey-brown silt clay, a continuation of worked soil horizon 6 (Fig. 3, Sections 3 and 4). This was sealed by a 0.15 m deep layer of red-brown silt clay, a probable continuation of layer 5.
- 3.1.7 Overlying this was a 0.1 m deep layer of fine crushed limestone (10), a levelling layer associated with the 0.04 m deep cinder layer (8), probably the original playground surface. This was overlaid by the overall layer of coarsely crushed limestone (2), 0.12 m in depth, forming a base for the present day carpark surface (1).

### **3.2 Finds**

- 3.2.1 Fragments of 19th- and 20th-century pottery and glass were recovered from within Layers 3 and 8. The presence of these was recorded but they were not retained.

### **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 the ground level within the development area had been substantially raised in the 19th-century. This was probably done immediately prior to construction of the original school building now used as the St David's Centre.
- 4.1.2 The presence of the layer of worked soil (6) suggests that the area had probably been used for horticulture prior to the construction of the building. The absence of earlier dating evidence either in the form of truncated features or as residual finds probably indicates that the development area was outside the centre of activity. The position of the site approximately 150 m east of what was historically the main thoroughfare through Moreton-in-Marsh from the Roman period onwards would also support this theory.

**APPENDICES****APPENDIX 1    ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.07 m	-	Tarmac carpark surface	-	C20th
2	Layer	0.13 m	-	Crushed stone hardcore base for tarmac	-	C20th
3	Layer	0.1 m	-	Made ground	Pottery	C19th
4	Layer	0.2 m - 0.4 m	-	Made ground	-	C19th
5	Layer	0.2 m - 0.3 m	-	Made ground	-	C19th
6	Layer	0.13 m	-	Buried soil horizon	-	-
7	Layer	> 0.1 m	-	Natural alluvium	-	-
8	Layer	0.05 m	-	Cinder surface	Pottery, glass	C19th
9	Layer	0.05 m	-	Gravel base for layer 8	-	C19th
10	Layer	0.1 m	-	Pulverised limestone	-	C19th
11	Layer	> 0.1 m	-	Natural gravels	-	-

**APPENDIX 2    BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

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

OA, 2006 *Redesdale Arms, High Street, Moreton in Marsh: Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

OA, 2008 *St David's Church Centre, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Sherwood and Pevsner, 1974 *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire*

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** St David's Church Centre, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire

**Site code:** MODAVID 08

**Grid reference:** SP 206 322

**Type of watching brief:** Machine excavation of foundation and service trenches

**Date and duration of project:** 2nd May to 26th June 2008, 4 site visits

**Area of site:** c500 m<sup>2</sup>

**Summary of results:** The watching brief revealed deep deposits of post-medieval made ground burying an earlier worked soil horizon. No significant archaeology was observed.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Corinium Museum, Cirencester in due course.





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Figure 1: Site location



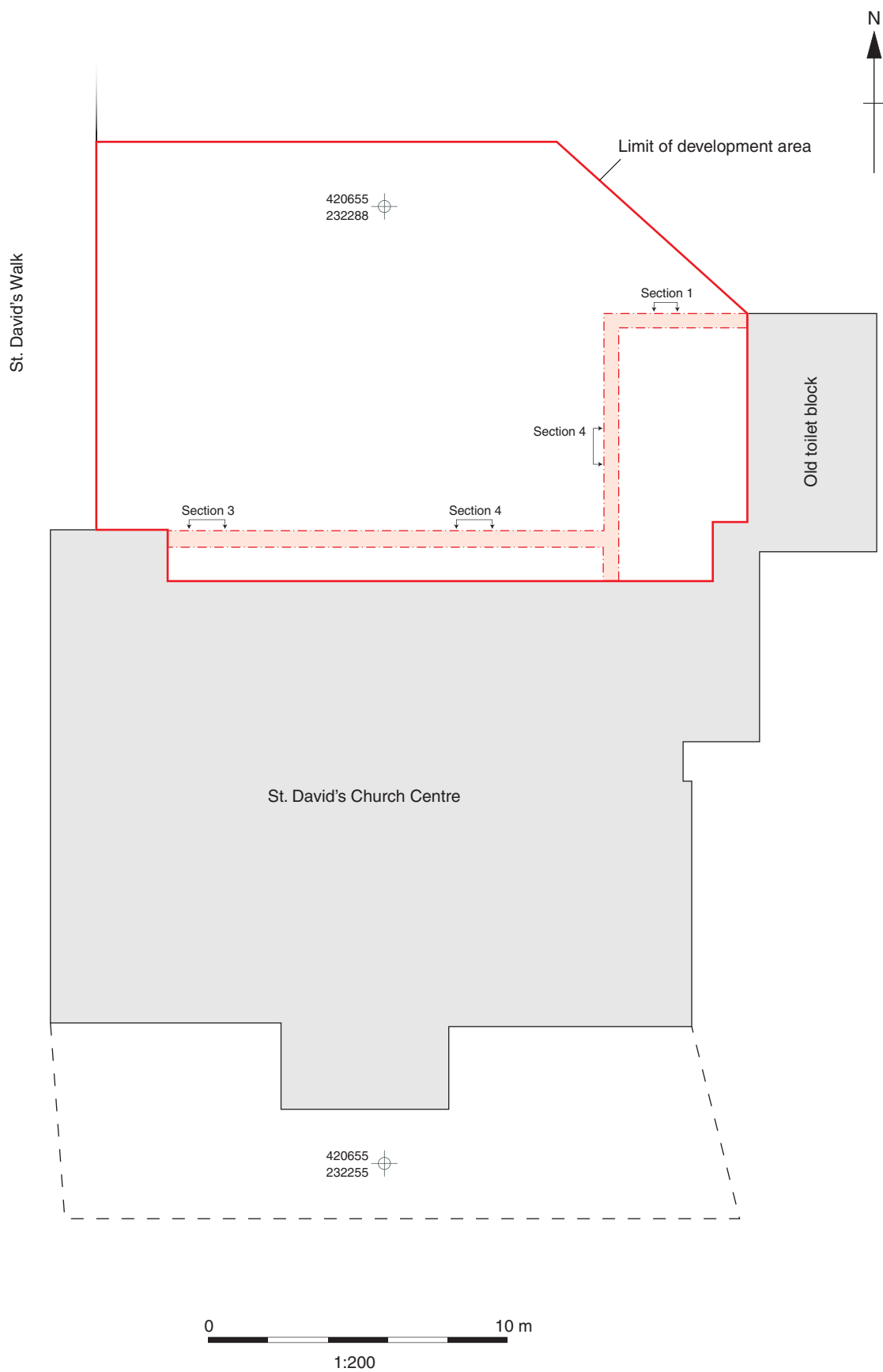


Figure 2: Site plan





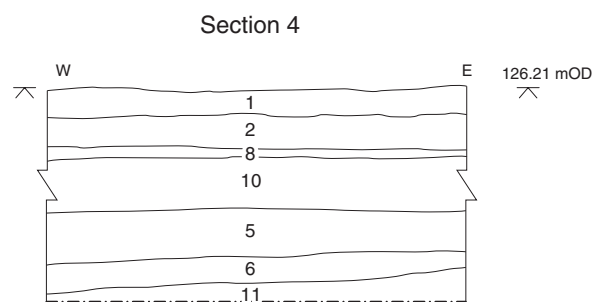
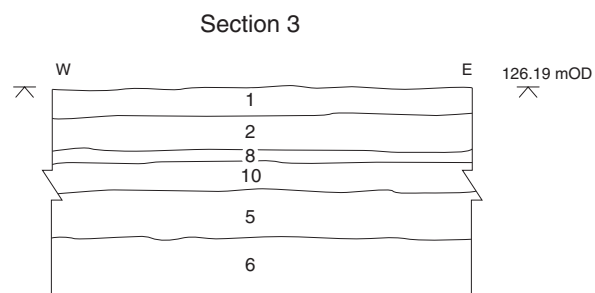
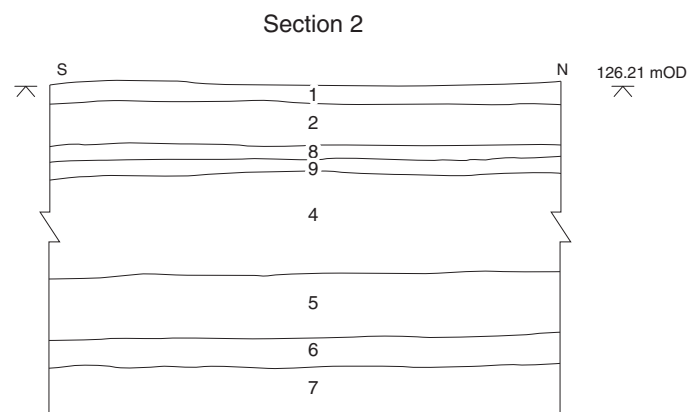
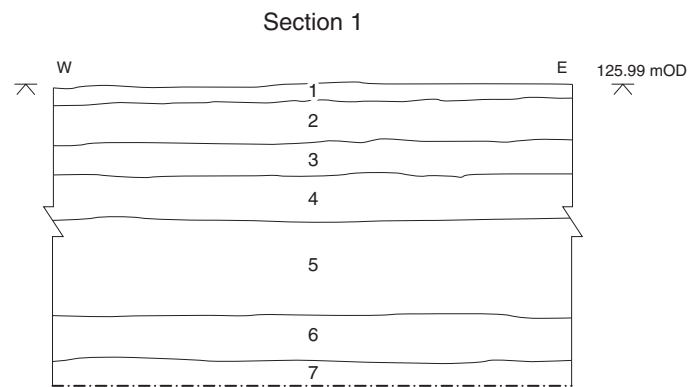


Figure 3: Sections



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