

Archaeology in Oxford

Oxford City report to the Oxford City and County Archaeological Forum

National Planning Policy Framework related field work between February-June 2024

No 6 Barrett Street

In March a watching brief was undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services during the construction of a domestic extension to the rear of No 6 Barret Street which is located within the precinct of Osney Abbey, no significant remains were recorded.

Knights Road, Blackbird Leys

In March archaeological trial trenching was undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology at Knights Road prior to the construction of a new housing development. No significant archaeological remains were recorded. Further work is planned on the western part of the site.

The Chequers, 17A Beaumont Road, Headington Quarry

In March the Oxfordshire Buildings Record undertook historic building recording of the Chequers Pub in Headington Quarry prior to its conversion into a domestic dwelling. The pub dates back to the early 19th century but has been heavily altered.

Nos 116-117 High Street

Between March and May historic building recording was undertaken by Donald Insall Associates at Nos 116- 117 High Street which are listed as early 19th century in date. An annotated photographic record was undertaken before and after stripping out and opening up works. The removal of the modern shop fit-out revealed an axial, sill beam along the west elevation at the front of the building that retains evidence of large mortice holes. A small portion of earlier wall fabric was revealed in the front north-east corner of the building, consisting of an upright timber stud and sill timber infilled with lath and plaster which had been painted with green stripes.

Kellogg College, Nos 60-64 Banbury Road

Between April and May a watching brief was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services during the construction of a small extension of the Balfour Building at Kellogg College in the vicinity of previously identified prehistoric remains, no significant archaeology was observed during the works.

Gibbs Crescent, Osney

Between May and June Oxford Archaeology returned to Gibbs Crescent to undertake limited excavations on the southern part of Osney Abbey. A number of walls, metaled surfaces and fishpond deposits were recorded. The previous main contractor had gone into bankruptcy and had left the site in a poor state. A new main contractor is to be appointed and further archaeological recording is to follow in late summer.

Oriel College Kitchen, Magpie Lane

In May an archaeological borehole survey was undertaken at the Oriel College kitchen site after the demolition of existing structures. The work was undertaken to test for the presence of the Late Saxon primary burh ditch in this location. The results are being processed.

Dominion Oils, Railway Lane, Littlemore

In May a strip and record excavation by John Moore Heritage Services and subsequent watching brief revealed three likely sunken features buildings and a ditch of early Anglo-Saxon date. Quantities of Saxon and re-used Roman pottery were recovered along with slag and a large assemblage of animal bone.



Above left: One of the sunken featured buildings being excavated in quadrants. Above right top: Roman and Saxon pottery from the feature. Above bottom right: A large assemblage of animal bone from the feature.

Nos 17 & 19 Norham Gardens, St Edmund Hall Student Accommodation

In June another phase of recording was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology at Nos 17 and 19 Norham Gardens. A number of Roman boundary or enclosure ditches were recorded associated with the extensive landscape of settlement, of village character, stretching from Norham Gardens through University Parks and the Science Area and south to Mansfield College. The report is forthcoming.

Northfield Hostel, Sandy Lane, Littlemore

In June further evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology on the western part of the Northfield Hostel development site. A single sizable Roman ditch with associated pottery and fragments of daub was recorded. Further work is planned.



Right: Roman pottery from the Northfield Hostel site.

The Radcliffe Infirmary, New Theatres

In June archaeological trial trenching was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology prior to the construction of a new building in the northern car park of the hospital. No significant archaeological remains were observed.

Not previously reported

Plan and section of a test pit showing Late Saxon feature

Nos. 9, 10-11, and 12 High Street

Between July and September 2023 two phases of test pit investigation were undertaken at Nos 11-12 High Street by Oxford Archaeology. The investigation revealed multiple features below the basement floor belonging to Late Saxon and medieval buildings that once fronted onto the medieval market. Some of the features are likely to relate to the very earliest settlement of the High Street. A simultaneous historic building investigation was undertaken by Donald Insall Associates. The building investigation included dendrochronological dating of the roof of No 12 which established a 16th century date for this part of the building (the building is listed as 17th century). A continuation of the No 12 cellar northwards under the Indoor Market yard was confirmed.

Image right: A late Saxon cess pit that contained six sherds of pottery dating from c900- 1050 (recovered from fill 1012). Image courtesy of Oxford Archaeology

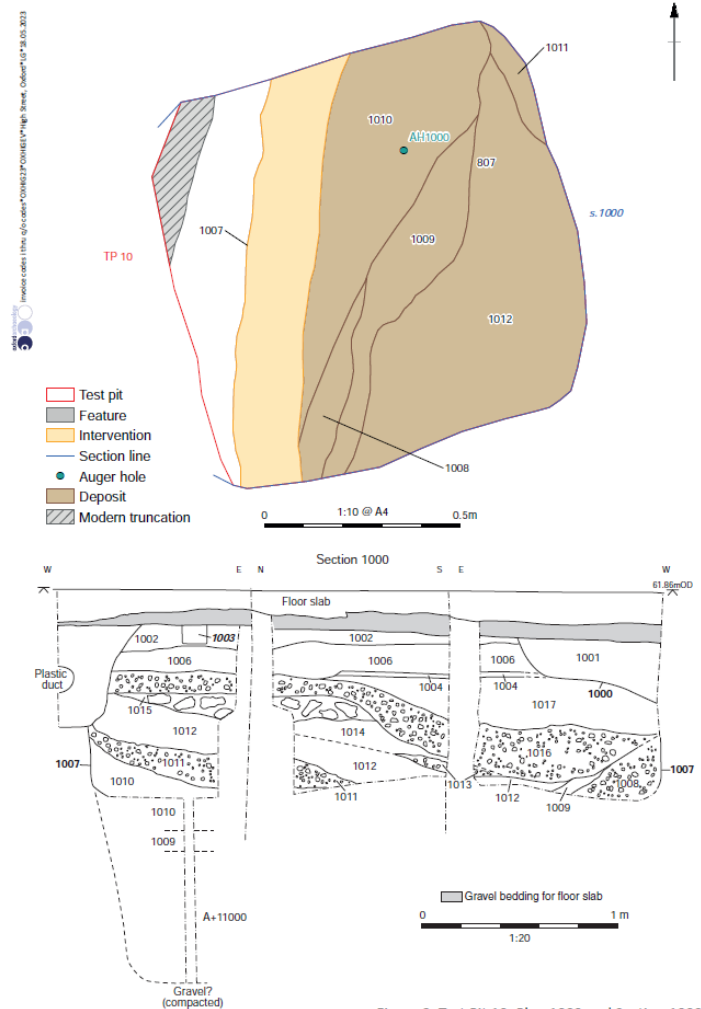


Figure 9: Test Pit 10; Plan 1002 and Section 1000

Other news

Historic Environment Record Audit

The Oxford Historic Environment Record has completed the Historic England HER Audit process with long term concerns being identified as 1) the dual structure of the Urban Archaeological Database and HER 2) adequate storage for the HER grey literature reference collection 3) improving communication with harder to reach communities.

New Roman Archaeology leaflet launch in July

A new leaflet on the Oxford Roman pottery industry has been produced by Oxford Archaeology, funded by OX PLACE and featuring a new artist reconstruction drawing by Mark Grindley of a Roman pottery manufacturing compound. The information leaflet is due to be released in July.

Oxfordshire's Past

I was pleased to be invited to talk about recent discoveries in Oxford and the OAHS Oxpast event in Bicester in June.

David Radford
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