

Archaeology in Oxford

**Oxford City report to the Oxford City and County Archaeological Forum
National Planning Policy Framework related field work between February and June 2026**

Iffley Lock

Between November 2025 and May 2026 a watching Brief was undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services intermittently during the excavation of four new anchor blocks at Iffley Lock, a Grade II listed structure. The pits were up to 1.6m deep and located a few meters east and west of the lock gates. No significant finds or features were noted. The original 'pound' lock at Iffley was in use by 1632 and was one of the first three locks on the Thames.

Hertford College, Main Quad and Chapel

Between February and May intermittent recording work by Oxford Archaeology was undertaken at Hertford College. A small number of Late Saxon features (likely cellar pits), at least one fragment of human bone and a sequence of early modern structures were recorded south of the Old Chapel and under the Cattle Street frontage range. The site work is now completed.



Image above: St Neot's Ware (Late Saxon) pottery from Late Saxon features at Hertford College, Cattle Street.

The Waynfleet building, St Clements

Between February and May a programme of phased evaluation and recording was undertaken at the Waynfleet building site by Pre-Construct Archaeology. Despite significant truncation caused by early-modern and modern construction, landscaping, and levelling archaeological deposits dating from the medieval through to the post-medieval periods were recorded. The earliest evidence was identified within the southern part of the site, close to the road frontage, where three evaluation

trenches were excavated. Two cut features were recorded within the natural clay: a probable 17th-century pit and part of another pit-like feature containing a single sherd of 12th–13th-century pottery. Subsequent monitoring across this truncated clay horizon close to the road frontage did not reveal further deep-cut archaeological features in this area.

Archaeological and borehole evidence demonstrated that the natural clay geology sloped northwards towards the river and was overlain by sequences of alluvial silts and clays, identified through auger survey and trench excavation at between 53.93m and 54.75m AOD. These deposits indicate repeated flooding and sediment accumulation along the riverside margin.

Adjacent to the river, the northeast corner of a stone-built structure was recorded cutting into the upper alluvial deposits. The surviving limestone wall of this structure were bonded with soft lime mortar. Although no dating evidence was recovered, the size of the wall suggests the remains of a small ancillary structure or outbuilding. This wall was subsequently sealed by a sequence of alluvial and deliberately dumped deposits. Closer to the road, on the site of the former Waynfleet building, a dump of cattle bones was noted after demolition works, likely representing the remains of a knuckle bone floor within a former structure disturbed when the building was constructed in the 1960s.

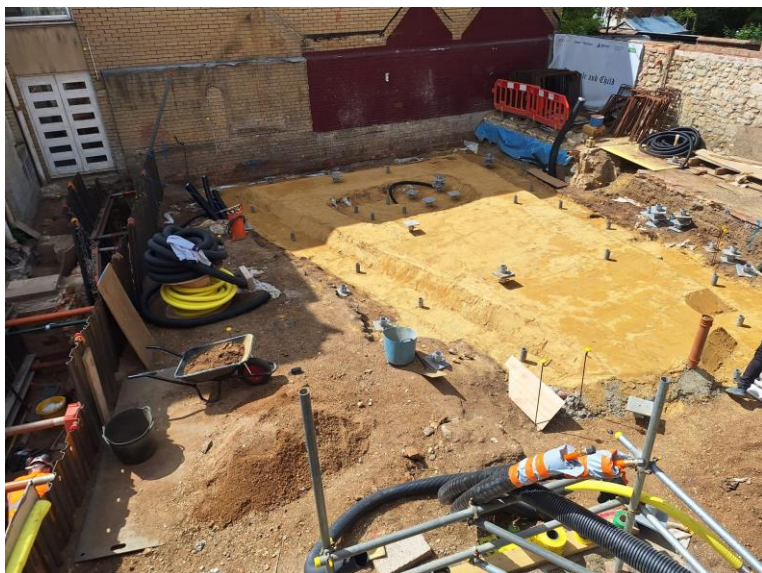
Unfortunately, unauthorised works were undertaken which led to the partial truncation of the lower end of the site, impacting on likely post-medieval levels. A structural pile mat was laid and parts of this were required to be re-excavated to allow archaeological assessment, so far as this was possible. The remains of post-medieval structures of ephemeral character were noted at the base of the truncated sequence. The site will therefore be recorded as a damage case on the annual Archaeological Monitoring Report.

[The Eagle and Child and former Green's Cafe, No 49 and Nos 50-51 St Giles](#)

Between February and June intermittent recording work has been undertaken by Oxford Archaeology to the rear of the Eagle and Child pub and former Green's Cafe on St Giles and within the basements of these buildings. The works to the rear have involved the limited excavation of medieval and post-medieval features (pits) belonging to suburban tenements on St Giles. Works within the basement recovered a remarkably well-preserved assemblage of post-medieval stoneware pottery (pictured below). Previously multiple phases of key-hole evaluation had been undertaken at this site leading to a flexible screw pile foundation being employed. In this instance the approach appears to have been successful as no unsurmountable deep obstructions were encountered.



Above: Near complete post-medieval stoneware jars from the basement of Greens Cafe (Image courtesy of Oxford Archaeology).



Above: The screw pile foundation to the rear of the Eagle and Child pub (Image courtesy of Oxford Archaeology).

No 179 Kingston Road

In February an archaeological trial trench was excavated by Oxford Archaeology at no 179 Kingston Road. No significant archaeological remains were recorded.

Minchery Farm (Littlemore Priory Dormitory Range).

In February a Level II historic building record was undertaken by Keevill Heritage Services during opening-up and assessment work at this site, which is currently on the buildings at risk register. Further work is to follow.

Chavasse Quad, St Peter's College

In March Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the insertion of a lift pit for a new passenger lift at the Chavasse Building. No archaeological deposits or features were encountered;

No 37 St Giles

In March an evaluation was undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services to the rear of No 37 St Giles. Three hand dug trenches revealed five medieval pits, five post medieval pits and a possible post-medieval well. The tops of these features were revealed at c500-800mm below the ground surface.

No 169 Oxford Road, Cowley

In March a watching brief was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services at 167-169 Oxford Road. Due to relevant groundworks on the site having been completed prior to being archaeologically monitored, retrospective recording was undertaken of the remaining exposed sections of foundation trenching relating only to the rear extension. Despite this and the archaeological potential of the site, no archaeological features or deposits were exposed. The resultant spoil from the excavated foundation trenching had been wholly retained within the constraints of the development site. Scanning and excavation of this did not recover any pre-modern artefactual material.

Nos 12-15 High Street (All Souls College)

Between March and June Oxford Archaeology have been intermittently excavating within the basements of Nos 12-15 High Street prior to the conversion of these post-medieval buildings into

college use. Late Saxon, medieval and post medieval features are located just below the cellar floors are either being carefully recorded or preserved in-situ. One remarkable survival is an area of cobbles at the southern end on the cellar of No 14 which is tentatively identified as a Late Saxon street surface. Another zone in the basement of No 15 appears to be the interior floor of a Late Saxon building with compacted ash and charcoal patches and at least two post hole voids.

Following recent Historic England advice regarding the use of terram OA have been working with Kingerlee to develop a methodology for protecting exposed archaeology during the construction of the new floor slab. Carefully compacted sand is being laid to allow workers to lay the slab and rebar component over the top without impacting the remains below.



Above: A Late Saxon (?) street surface in the cellar of No 14 High Street.



Above: A Late Saxon building (?) with post hole voids within the cellar of No 15 High Street.



Above: A test area of compacted sand being investigated by Oxford Archaeology to establish a methodology to protect the archaeology to be preserved in-situ during construction works.

New College Old Lodge

In April a watching brief was undertaken by Robin Bashford during the installation of a new metal gate to the Old Lodge at New College. An undated buried soil horizon was encountered below the concrete and flagstone surface of the entrance. A possible construction cut for the southern wall of the existing structure was identified, which may imply that the soil horizon pre-dates the construction of the Old Lodge in the latter part of the 14th Century. No other significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the works.



Image above Excavations within the Old Lodge, New College (Image courtesy of Robin Bashford).

Odeon, George Street

In April an evaluation and archaeological borehole survey was undertaken within the Odeon site, George Street, by Headland Archaeology. The trenching recovered only evidence for post medieval dumped material and modern disturbance. The results of the borehole survey are forthcoming.

Ozone Car Park

In April archaeological trial trenching and test pitting was undertaken within the car park of the Kassam Stadium by Pre Construct Archaeology. No significant features were recorded but the extent of the Minchery Farm peat fen was further mapped. The results are forthcoming.

Somerville College, New Academic Building

Between April and June Oxford Archaeology have been undertaking an intermittent strip and record excavation on the footprint of a new college building at Somerville College adjacent to the ROQ site. To date the strip has exposed building footings relating to early modern buildings that once occupied the site. The work is ongoing.

Magdalen College, The Garden Building

Between April and June Pre-Construct Archaeology have been undertaking an initial phase of work at the Garden Building site at Magdalen College, located north of the College bar and kitchen. The works under the former flower beds south of the kitchen have revealed the foundations of a substantial building. It is currently not possible to say confidently whether the foundation is part of a post-medieval building or incorporates part of an earlier medieval hospital structure, though the re-use of moulded stone can be noted in the foundations. The work is ongoing.



Above: Exposed walls of likely medieval structure at Magdalen College.

No 106 Walton Street

In May a watching brief was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services during minor building works at No 106 Walton Street. The report is forthcoming.

Not Previously Reported

Christ Church, south cloister walk

Between April 2025 and January 2026 an archaeological test pit and subsequent watching brief was undertaken by Graham Keevill during the construction of a new access ramp into the south cloister walk. The test pit had to be abandoned when a mass concrete raft was found beneath the extant paving. The excavation for the ramp work exposed the clasping buttresses at the south-west corner of a free-standing tower which had been built in the cloister in the early 16th century, perhaps at the instigation of Cardinal Wolsey after his suppression of St Frideswide's Priory but was demolished soon afterwards. The buttresses were left in situ, unaffected by the excavations and subsequent construction of the ramp. A stone-capped culvert was also recorded.

St. Edwards Field, side entrances, Woodstock Road

In March 2025 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology during groundworks associated with the widening of two entrance roads towards the playing fields of St Edward's School west of the Woodstock Road. The work was undertaken because of the presence of undated but probably prehistoric or Roman parch marks in the vicinity. No archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were encountered during the project.

David Radford
Archaeologist, Oxford City Council