

WHAT ARE THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS DOING AT THE WESTGATE?

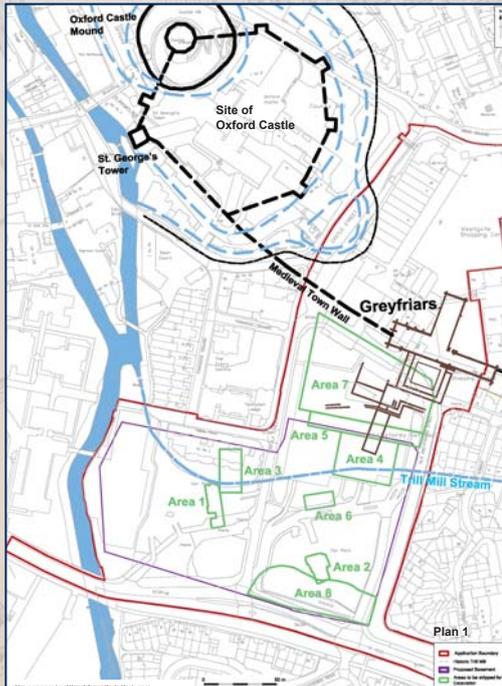
WESTGATE
OXFORD



Oxford Archaeology is here to record and recover the remains of human activity that have survived on the site. This work is taking place during the initial stages of the construction of the Westgate Oxford. The developer, Westgate Oxford Alliance (Land Securities and The Crown Estates) and the main contractor Laing O'Rourke, are funding and facilitating all the archaeological works as a requirement by Oxford City Council.

Excavation

The site has been divided into 8 different excavation areas (see Plan 1):



Areas 1 and 2 to look at 19th century housing
 Area 3 to examine an old channel called the Trill Mill Stream
 Areas 4, 5 and 7 to study the Greyfriars complex and the Trill Mill Stream
 Area 6 to investigate a possible water mill
 Area 8 to look for a possible Iron Age village

The excavation stage is very important as this is our only chance to recover information before building work starts. Our ability to understand the site depends on accurate surveying, and detailed descriptions and drawings of the archaeological remains, such as walls, pits and wells, ditches and occupation deposits.

Artefacts and soil samples are collected and numbered according to where they are found.



A computer drawing of all the archaeology is linked to a database that contains information about each archaeological feature, such as the description, a photograph, dating evidence and other finds. This makes analysis quicker and easier at a later date.

Analysis - Specialists

All the artefacts and samples collected are passed on to our specialists who each write a report.

Pottery Specialists - On this site we expect most of the pottery to be medieval or post-medieval. The specialists provide us with the date when the pottery was made, where it was made, how it was made and what it



was used for. This will help us to understand what was going on in each area of the site (or in particular buildings) at different times.

Animal Bone Specialists - Animal bones help us understand what and how much meat people were eating. In addition, certain industries, such as leather tanning and horn working, can be identified.



Environmental Specialists/ Plant Remains

- Samples taken from pits, ditches, hearths wells or other features can tell many things, including the local environmental conditions at the time, what plants people were eating, what plants people were using for fuel, and sometimes (through radiocarbon dating of burnt material) how old the material is.



Other Finds Specialists - Other finds such as worked stone, metal objects, coins, glass, metalworking remains, wood, building material, fired clay etc are each analysed by a specialist and can provide additional information on dating, industrial processes, trade and even fashion.

Final Analysis

All the information collected on site is then combined with the information from specialists and is used to build up a picture of what happened on the site over time. We will also study historic records and maps, and look at other excavation results. All this evidence will increase our understanding of not just this site, but of Oxford's and its residents' past over the last 1100 years.



Eventually, after all the work is completed, the results will be published so that everybody can see what we have found.

