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25-31 SPITTAL STREET, MARLOW, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: SU 84875 86705	Report No: 4320
District: Wycombe	Site Code: AS 1575
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 4415
Signed:	Date: 31 May 2013

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	25-31 Spittal Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire		
<p><i>In March 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at 25-31 Spittal Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 84875 86705). The monitoring was commissioned by Shanly Homes Ltd in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of part single-storey part two-storey extensions to provide ground floor extensions to retail units with a two-bed flat at first floor.</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within the historic core of the town of Marlow and comprises a small plot of land to the rear of buildings fronting Spittal Street. The town is of a Saxon origin and the site had a potential for Saxon, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the monitoring revealed a flint stone well possibly of 18th - 19th century origin, a brick well or soakway of late 19th century date and the remains of a wall of similar date. Two modern (20th century) ditches (F1013 and F1015) and a pit (F1015) related to construction and drainage were also recorded.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	06-15/03/2013		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	4415	Site code	AS 1575
Type of project	Archaeological Monitoring & Recording		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Rear yard of the houses with retail units		
Planned development	Rear extensions to retail units and dwelling at first floor		
Main features (+dates)	18 th -19 th century flint stone well, late 19 th century brick well or soakway and wall		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	Bucks	Wycombe	Marlow
HER/ SMR for area	Buckinghamshire HER		
Post code (if known)	-		
Area of site	c. 100m ²		
NGR	SU 84875 86705		
Height AOD (min/max)	c. 33m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Zbigniew Pozorski		
Funded by	Shanly Homes Ltd		
Full title	25-31 Spittal Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire. Archaeological Monitoring & Recording		
Authors	Pozorski, Z.		
Report no.	4320		
Date (of report)	May 2013		

25-31 SPITTAL STREET, MARLOW, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING

SUMMARY

In March 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at 25-31 Spittal Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 84875 86705). The monitoring was commissioned by Shanly Homes Ltd in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of part single-storey part two-storey extensions to provide ground floor extensions to retail units with a two-bed flat at first floor.

The site lies within the historic core of the town of Marlow and comprises a small plot of land to the rear of buildings fronting Spittal Street. The town is of a Saxon origin and the site had a potential for Saxon, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.

In the event the monitoring revealed flint stone well possibly of 18th - 19th century origin, a brick well or soakway of late 19th century date and the remains of a wall of similar date. Two modern (20th century) ditches (F1013 and F1015) and a pit (F1015) related to construction and drainage were also recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2013 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording at 25-31 Spittal Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 84875 86705; Figs. 1 & 2). The monitoring was commissioned by Shanly Homes Ltd in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of part single-storey part two-storey extensions to provide ground floor extensions to retail units with a two-bed flat at first floor (Wycombe District Planning Ref. 12/06713/FUL).

1.2 The monitoring was undertaken in accordance to a generic brief issued by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 02/11/2012), and approved by BCAS. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 2008).

1.3 The project objective was to identify and record any archaeological remains revealed by the proposed groundworks, with particular regard to

identification and recording of any Saxon, medieval and post-medieval features relating to the historic core of Marlow.

Planning policy context

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The site lies within the historic core of the town of Marlow or Great Marlow, which is situated within the Wycombe District of Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). The settlement of Marlow is located approximately 6.5km to the south-south-west of High Wycombe and c.7km north-west of Maidenhead. The smaller settlement of Little Marlow lies 2.5km to the north-east of Marlow, whilst the village of Bisham is situated c.1.5km to the south-south-east.

2.2 The site comprises an irregular plot of land on the northern side of Spittal Street just c.25m south-west of the roundabout linking it with Dean Street/Chapel Street. It is occupied by houses fronting Spittal Street (Nos 25-31) with ground floor retail units and a small backyard opening into a rear car park and garages (Fig. 2).

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The area surrounding the town of Marlow has a gently undulating relief that slopes downwards to the River Thames, which flows on a south-west to north-east alignment, only 450m south-east of the site. The surrounding relief varies from c.85m AOD near Bovingdon Green to 28m beside the River Thames, whilst the site itself lies at a height of c. 33m AOD.

3.2 Soils on the site remain unsurveyed; however, the area surrounding the town is characterised by soils of the Sonning 1 association, described as well drained flinty coarse loamy and sandy soils, mainly over gravel (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). To the immediate south of the town centre, the Thames River alluvium is present.

3.3 The solid geology of the area is of Upper Cretaceous chalk (British Geological Survey 1978). It is composed of structureless, off-white chalk with localised yellow-brown staining and slightly silty gravel. The interface between the Upper Chalk and any overlying deposits is typically undulating and may be characterised by the presence of irregular hollows (termed pipes, swallow holes or solution features) that have resulted from the dissolution of the chalk by slightly acidic water (SSEW 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Relatively few archaeological investigations have taken place within the town of Marlow to date. Traces of prehistoric occupation of the area have nevertheless been discovered nearby as prehistoric finds are abundant in the Thames valley (Rennell 2005). Prehistoric finds have included Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic flint implements, Neolithic pottery and a few small sherds of early Iron Age pottery (Pastscape website). Cropmarks of probable ring ditches, likely to be the remains of Bronze Age barrows, have been revealed by aerial photography, whilst two inhumation burials discovered in 1881 are believed to date to the early Iron Age.

4.2 Although a number of Roman villas are known to exist elsewhere in the Thames valley, such evidence is scarce from the area of Marlow. Romano-British finds found in proximity of the site comprise only a Roman bronze coin of Vespasian, Romano-British pottery and quern fragments found in gravel pit and a Roman bronze fibula found beside two small bronze statuettes (Pastscape website).

4.3 Evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation of the Marlow area is also limited, although Saxo-Norman material was recovered during excavations at the Wethered Brewery, which lay only 200m south-south-west of the site (Bonner 1996).

4.4 Despite its prominent position in the historic core of Marlow and fronting the High Street, relatively little is known of the site from documentary sources. The settlement of Marlow or Great Marlow dates to the medieval period, although little is known of the history of the borough other than that burgage rights had been obtained by 1183 (Page 1969). The manor was granted to the earl of Gloucester in 1107 and a deer park at Marlow is recorded in a document of 1233. A medieval market was established in 1227 – 28 at the town's Market Place, which lies at the northern end of the High Street, and two fairs were held in the early 14th century. The Old Parsonage building on St Peter's Street dates to the 14th century (Colmer 1933), whilst the Hospital of St Thomas, which was founded before 1384, may have stood on Spittal Street. Medieval activity was probably focussed around the medieval parish church and early bridge in Marlow, and the High Street almost certainly dates from the medieval period (Rennell 2005). Evidence of 11th century and later settlement along the High Street was revealed during archaeological investigation (Bonner 1996; Ford 2006).

4.5 In 1665, the town of Marlow suffered from a visitation of the plague from which 50 residents died (Colmer 1933). During the Tudor period, however, the town underwent resurgence, with thriving trade and many roadside inns, particularly along the High Street. The principal commercial undertaking in the town was brewing carried out by the famous Brewery of Messrs. Thomas Wethered and Sons, Ltd, which was founded by George Wethered in c. 1744, and was later moved to the west side of the High Street by his son, Thomas (Brown & Hunt 1994; Ford & Smith 1904). The brewery stood at Nos. 72 – 76 High Street, less than 300m south of the site, and continued to be associated with the Wethered family until after World War II, later closing in 1988. To the south-west of the site is a house known as 'Remnantz', which was used as part of the Royal Military College, established at Marlow in 1799. The buildings at the site are of 20th century origin.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The principal elements monitored were the mechanically and hand-excavated foundation trenches for new extensions to the rear of the existing buildings (Fig. 2).

5.2 The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all groundworks, the inspection of the subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the excavated area was scanned by metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Deposits present on the site were recorded in sample sections:

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 8)</i> <i>South-west foundation trench, facing north-east-north</i> <i>0.00 = 33.47m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.06m	M1000	Pavement stones.
0.06 – 0.14m	M1001	Concrete base for M1000.
0.14 – 0.25m	L1002	Made ground. Mixed CBM rubble with yellow sand and silt.
0.25 – 0.81m	L1004	Made ground. Mid grey, friable, silty sand with moderate CBM fragments.
0.81 – 0.89m	L1005	Light brown, loose, silty gravel with occasional CBM fragments.
0.89m+	L1006	Natural. Mid to dark orangey yellow, loose, gravel.

<i>Sample section 2 (DP 10)</i> <i>Western foundation trench, facing north-east</i> <i>0.00 = 33.54m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.04m	M1007	Tarmac.
0.04 – 0.15m	L1008	Concrete base for M1000.
0.15 – 0.24m	L1009	Dark grey and red compacted CBM fragments within a sandy silt matrix.
0.24 – 0.51m	L1010	Made ground. Mid grey, friable, silty sand with moderate CBM fragments.
0.51m+	L1006	Natural gravel. As above.

<i>Sample section 3 (DP 14)</i> <i>Central foundation trench, facing south-west</i> <i>0.00 = 33.63m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.16m	L1011	Redeposited gravel mixed with grey silt and sand.
0.16 – 0.37m	L1014	Made ground. Mid brownish grey, compact, silty sand with frequent CBM fragments.
0.37m+	L1006	Natural gravel. As above.

<i>Sample section 4 (DP 16)</i> <i>Central foundation trench, facing south-east</i> <i>0.00 = 33.61m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.14m	L1011	Redeposited gravel. As above.
0.14 – 0.28m	L1014	Made ground. As above.
0.28m+	L1006	Natural gravel. As above.

<i>Sample section 5 (DP 18)</i>		
<i>Northern foundation trench, facing north-east</i>		
<i>0.00 = 33.72m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.07m	M1017	Tarmac.
0.07 – 0.11m	L1018	Mid red and grey, compacted, CBM rubble.
0.11 – 0.29m	L1019	Light brown, loose, silty sand with occasional CBM fragments.
0.29 – 0.44m	L1020	Dark grey, compact, sandy silt with occasional CBM fragments.
0.44m+	L1006	Natural gravel. As above.

Description The monitoring revealed remains of a wall (M1003), a well (M1021) and a possible well or soakway (M1024). Two modern (20th century) ditches (F1013 and F1015) and a pit (F1015) related to construction and drainage were also recorded.

Wall M1003 (1+ x 0.58 x 0.20m; DP 8) was located in the south-western corner of the site and was parallel to the existing building wall being situated 0.95m apart. It was constructed of mid red coloured bricks (0.220 x 0.105 x 0.06m) bonded with a yellow sandy mortar. The wall was in poor state of preservation and was recorded within the south-western section of foundation trench (Sample Section 1).

Well M1021 (DP 4 –7) was circular and also located in the south-western end of the site. It measured 1.05-1.09m in outer diameter at the top reduced to 0.95-1.02m c.1m below. The feature was present c. 0.75m below existing ground level and its base was not established. The maximum depth exposed was 1.10m and the wall was c. 0.15m thick. The feature was constructed of flint stones of irregular shapes although the majority of stones were of similar size (c.0.20 x 0.15 x 0.10m) and roughly treated. No evidence of bonding material was apparent. The top of the structure contained two courses of dark red bricks (0.230 x 0.105 x 0.065m) which survived on the eastern side of M1021 alongside two layers of roof tiles on the western side. Again no bonding material was evident. The backfill (uppermost 0.50m), L1002, was a mixed CBM rubble with yellow sand and silt. Below L1002 was a layer of white, friable, chalk (L1027; 0.40m thick) and below the chalk was L1022, a dark, friable, sandy silt with frequent CBM fragments. The backfill layers and the brick and tiles additions suggest 20th century use and abandonment of a well constructed in the late 18th – 19th century.

Well or Soakaway M1024 (0.80+ x 0.40m; DP 7) was located to the west of M1021 and appeared to be located within a large ditch, F1025. The feature was poorly preserved and as it was located within the loose backfill of F1025

for safety reasons it could not been fully recorded. It was a circular or rectangular feature constructed of dark red coloured bricks (0.225 x 0.105 x 0.065m). The feature was likely a well or a soakway although the latter interpretation seems more likely as Ditch F1025 was almost certainly related to site drainage. The soakway was probably of late 19th century date possibly later incorporated into a 20th century drain and eventually backfilled.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the programme of archaeological monitoring and recording with an exception of limited access to Soakway M1024 due to safety reasons.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site was commonly overlain by modern tarmac and paving stones (0.10m max thick). Below were deposits of made ground and layers containing mostly CBM (0.20 – 0.70m thick).

8.2 The natural deposit, L1006, was present at 0.30 – 0.90m below existing ground level and comprised a mid to dark orangey yellow, loose, gravel.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for Saxon, medieval and post-medieval archaeology. Such remains have been found in the vicinity of the site and relate to the historic core of Marlow.

9.2 The earliest feature was likely the flint stone well, M1021, possibly dating from the 18th century. The well was utilised in the late 19th and early 20th century as a soakway. The site was severely truncated by the construction of drainage features including manholes, soakway and sewers. Despite this truncation the new foundation trenches exposed undisturbed stratigraphy within much of the site and the conclusion is that no occupation other than (possibly) late post-medieval through early modern to modern was present.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Buckinghamshire County Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Shanly Homes Ltd for funding the project and for their assistance (in particular Messrs Ian Farmer and Paul Spokes). AS would also like to acknowledge the assistance of DWM Construction.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Eliza Alqassar and Mr Sandy Kidd of Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. 25-31 Spittal Street, Marlow. Looking south.



DP 2. Rear of the site. Looking south.



DP 3. South-west foundation trench. Looking west.



DP 4. Well F1021. Looking west-north-west.



DP 5. Well F1021. Looking east-south-east.



DP 6. Well F1021. Looking south-east.



DP 7. Soakway F1024. Looking south-west.



DP 8. Sample section 1. Looking south-west-south.



DP 9. Western foundation trench. Looking south.



DP 10. Sample section 2. Looking south-west.



DP 11. Western foundation trench. Looking south.



DP 12. North-western foundation trench. Looking west.



DP 13. Central foundation trench. Looking north-east.



DP 14. Sample section 3. Looking north-north-east.



DP 15. Central foundation trench. Looking north..



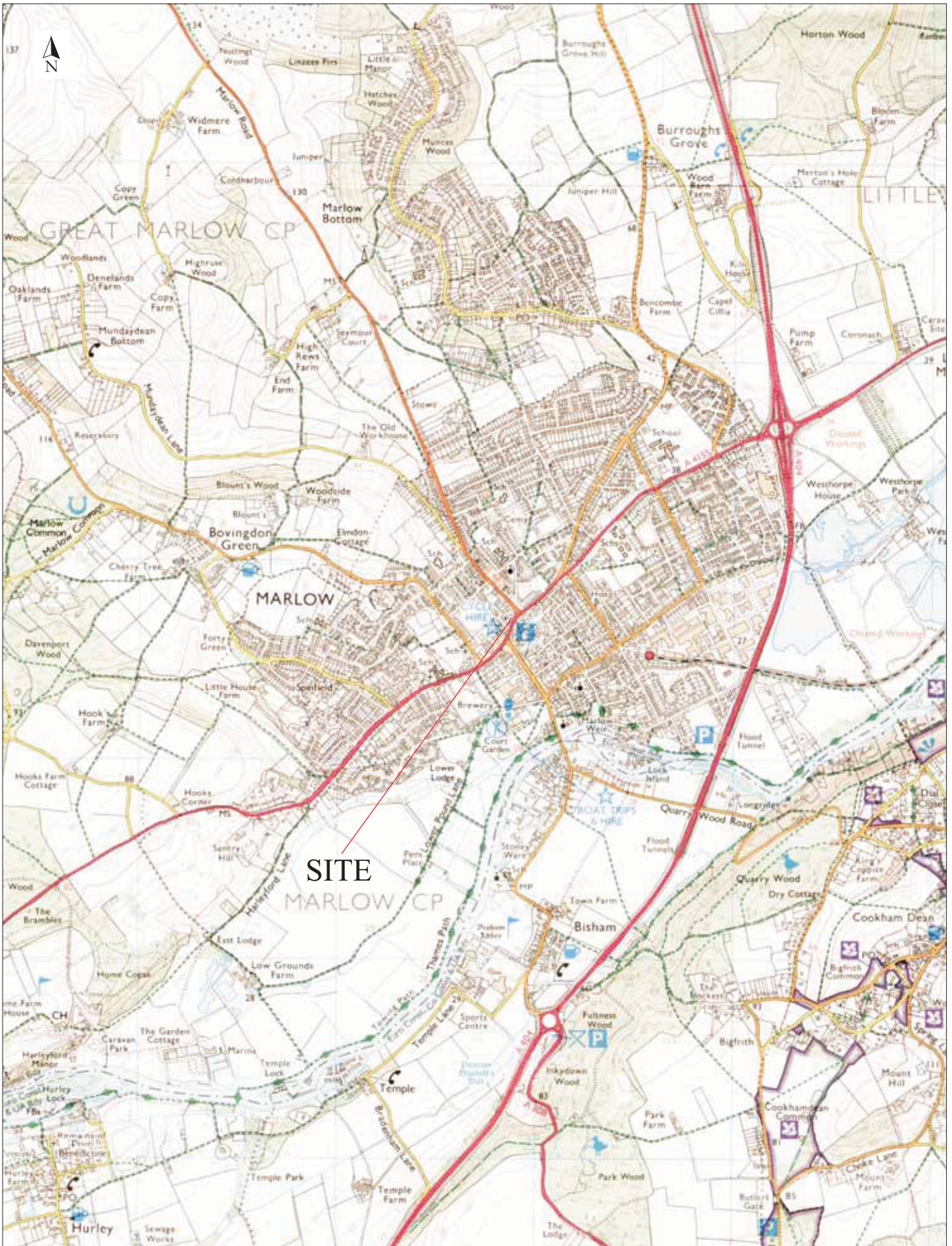
DP 16. Sample section 4. Looking north-west.



DP 17. Northern foundation trench. Looking north-east.

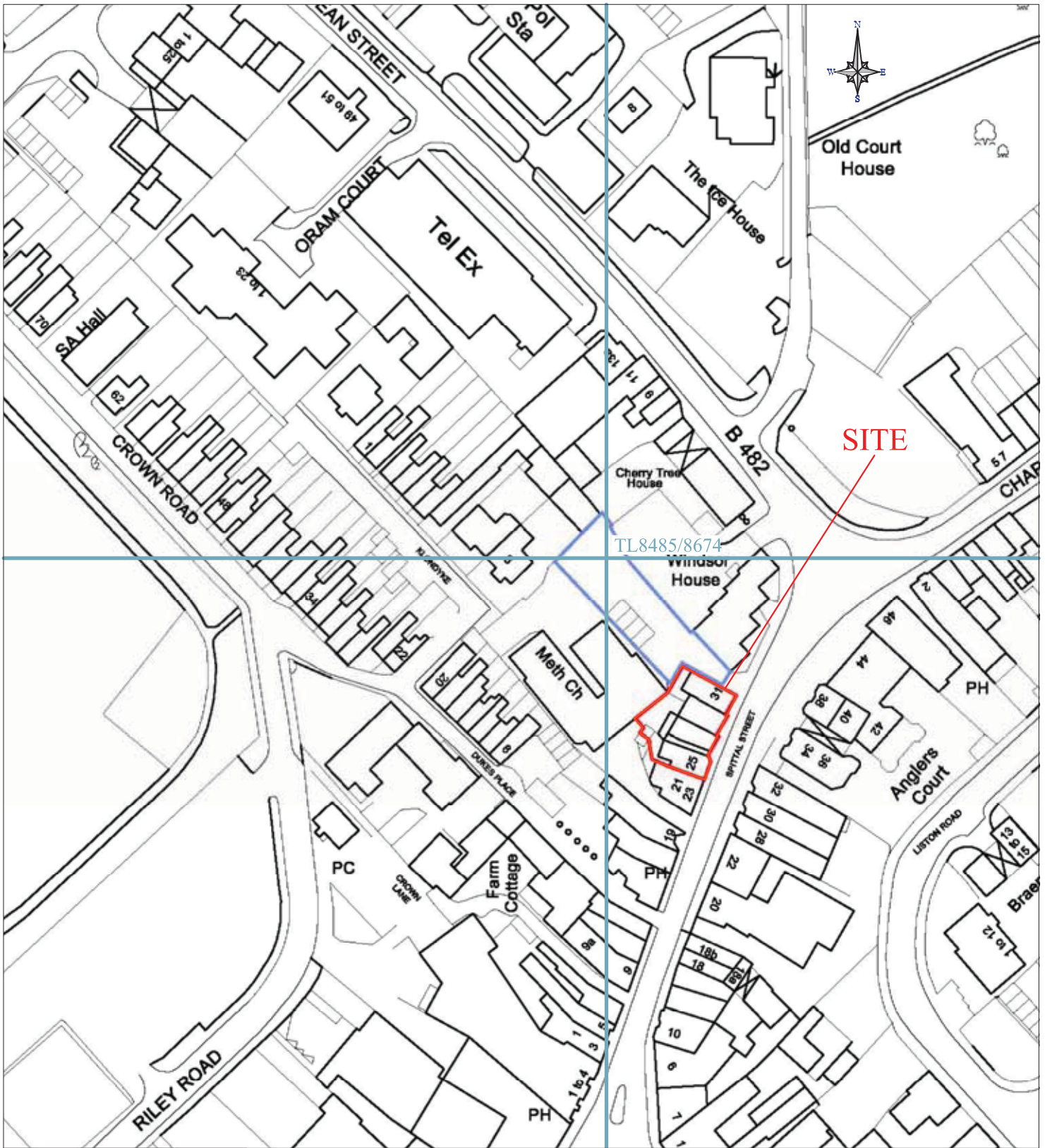


DP 18. Sample section 5. Looking south-west.

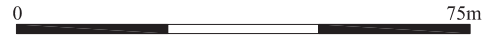


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:1250 at A4



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Fig. 3 Sample section location plan

Scale 1:200 at A4