

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Chalmore Hole Ferry House, Chalmore Gardens,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Andy Muddin**

**Site Code: CHW20/211**

**(SU 6083 8868)**

**Chalmore Hole Ferry House, Chalmore Gardens,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr Summer Alston-Smith**

by Andrew Mundin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CLW 20/211

**May 2021**

## Summary

**Site name:** Chalmore Hole Ferry House, Chalmore Gardens, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 6083 8868

**Site activity:** Archaeological Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 20th April to 12th May 2021

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Munding; David Sanchez, Pierre-Damian Manisse

**Site code:** CHW 20/211

**Summary of results:** A watching brief was maintained during extension of the existing house. Initially, the excavation of the test pits were recorded to locate the depths of modern service runs. These pits were no greater than 0.75m deep. Following piling, groundbeam trenches were dug and these were monitored. No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were encountered.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 21.05.21
	Steve Preston ✓ 21.05.21

# Chalmore Hole Ferry House, Chalmore Gardens, Wallingford, Oxfordshire Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Munding

Report 20/211

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording was undertaken at Chalmore Hole Ferry House, Chalmore Gardens, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 9EP (SU 6083 8868) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the homeowner, Mr Summer Alston-Smith of the above address.

A renewed planning permission (21/S0692/HH; previously 17/S3084/HH), has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council to create side and rear extensions to the existing property. A condition (6) was attached to the permission regarding archaeology, that required an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the District Council's policies on archaeology (ENV9, S Oxon Local Plan 2035). A Written Scheme of Investigation based on a brief produced by Ms Clare King, formerly of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS), and was approved by the District Council as advised by Ms King. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Munding, David Sanchez and Pierre-Damian Manisse between 20th April and 12th May 2021, with the site code is CLW 20/211.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the west bank of the River Thames on the southern margins of Wallingford (Fig.2). Chalmore Gardens is a side road leading east from the Reading Road towards the house and the river.

The underlying geology comprises alluvial clays and silts, over Northmoor Sand and Gravel. (BGS 1980). The site lies at a height of c.51m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential stems from the site's location in the suburbs of the historic core of Wallingford to the south of the 9th-century 'Burh' defences (Airs *et al* 1975). Numerous archaeological excavations and observations have occurred within the historic town centre (ie; Preston 2010; Christie *et al* 2013), describing in depth its development from Saxon occupation to a Medieval market centre. Rather less is known about the river margins and its defensive works linking with its historic bridging points. A number of Bronze Age tools and weapons were recording through dredging from the environs of the site. The name Ferry House was once linked to a ferry that cross to the opposite bank and Newnham Murren. This point of the river was also the site of lock gates and a weir until the late 19th century.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the project are to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in this instance monitoring of preliminary test pits followed by the excavation of the footing trenches after piling. Excavations were undertaken by mechanical excavator fitted with a flat bladed and wide bucket, with spoil heaps checked for finds.

## **Results**

### *Test pits*

Three small hand-excavated test pits were dug in the garden to locate a number of services, all west of the building (Fig.3; Pl.1). These were at varied depth with a drainage pipe at 0.19m deep (ran W-E) in TP1 and a metal pipe ran N-S) leading to the south at a depth of 0.72m in TP2 and TP3. No natural geology, archaeological deposits nor artefacts were exposed in the test pits..

### *Groundbeam trenches*

After piling, the excavation of the groundbeam trenches were dug (Fig.3). All trenches were 0.8m wide. Excavation showed some disturbance of the top of the made ground starting at 0.5m, but not continuing to the base of the base of excavation beyond 0.75m. A dark bluish brown clay (alluvium) , was exposed in the base of the trenches in the south, from 0.35m. No archaeological deposits were encountered, with occasional modern

brick and white patterned 'china' only found in the upper topsoil deposit, and less occasionally in the backfill of the service runs.

During excavation in the west, sand and gravel was exposed in section from 0.25m deep, though this was clearly redeposited, once at the base of the trench exposed blueish grey clay alluvium underneath from a depth of 0.65m deep. Similar stratigraphy was observed during excavation of the east facing trenches in the north west of the new footings and the north facing footing (Fig.4). None of the modern deposits (three different layered lenses), seen in the middle part of the footings in the western section were seen to be deeper than 0.68m. A brick base within concrete was exposed in the west section of the north east footing. This was a former base for the stairs that, until recently lead to the western façade door.

## **Finds**

The only artefacts observed were of modern origin such as white or blue transfer printed 'china' and brick and tile. These were retained on site.

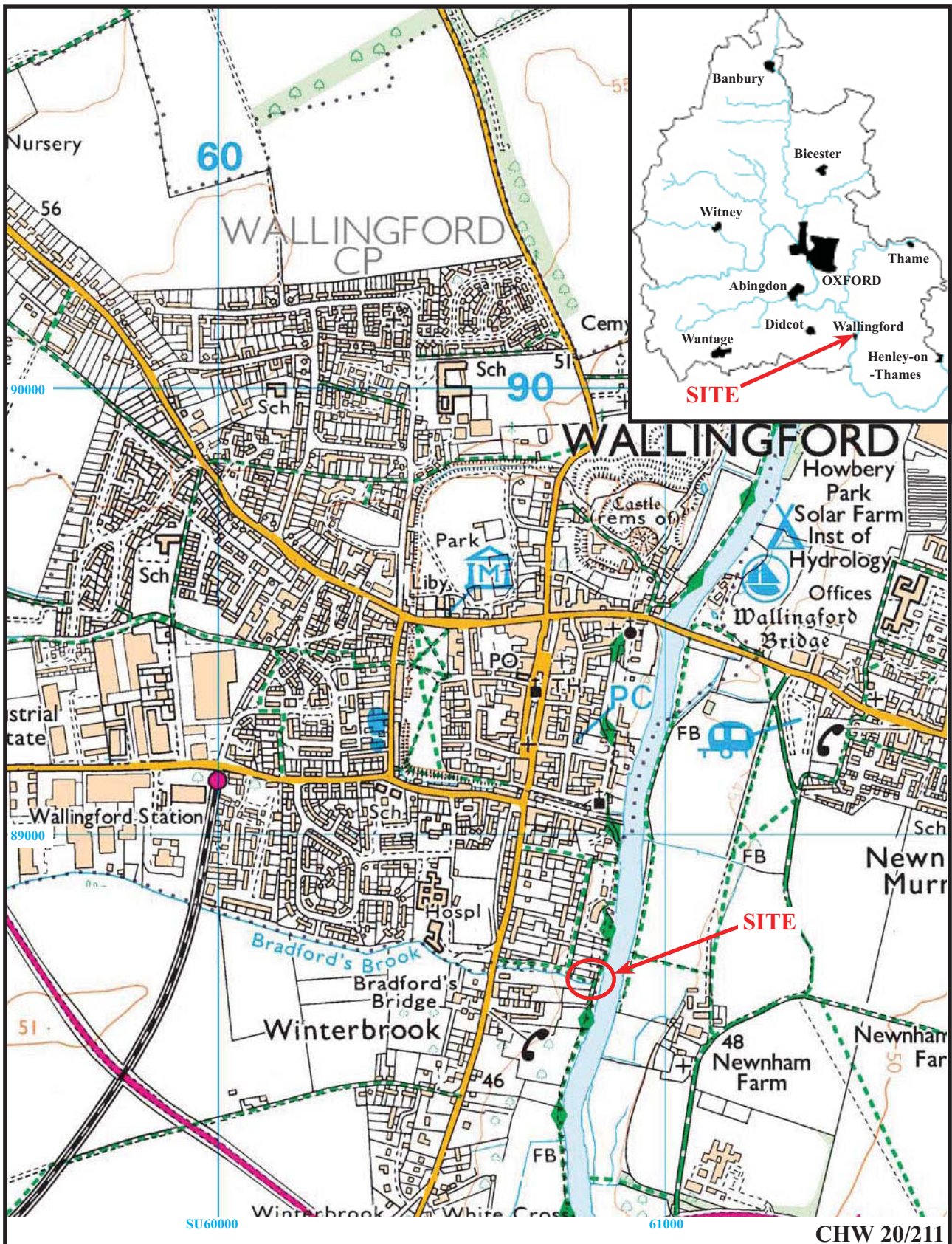
## **Conclusion**

Despite the archaeological potential of the site, no archaeological deposits were encountered with the groundbeam trenches only just being deeper than deposits of modern made ground and just exposing the underlying alluvium. It is possible that archaeological deposits lie deeper down beneath more recent alluvium, but, alternatively, the current house could have been built on reclaimed land that was a part of the river system in Saxon and Medieval times.

## **References**

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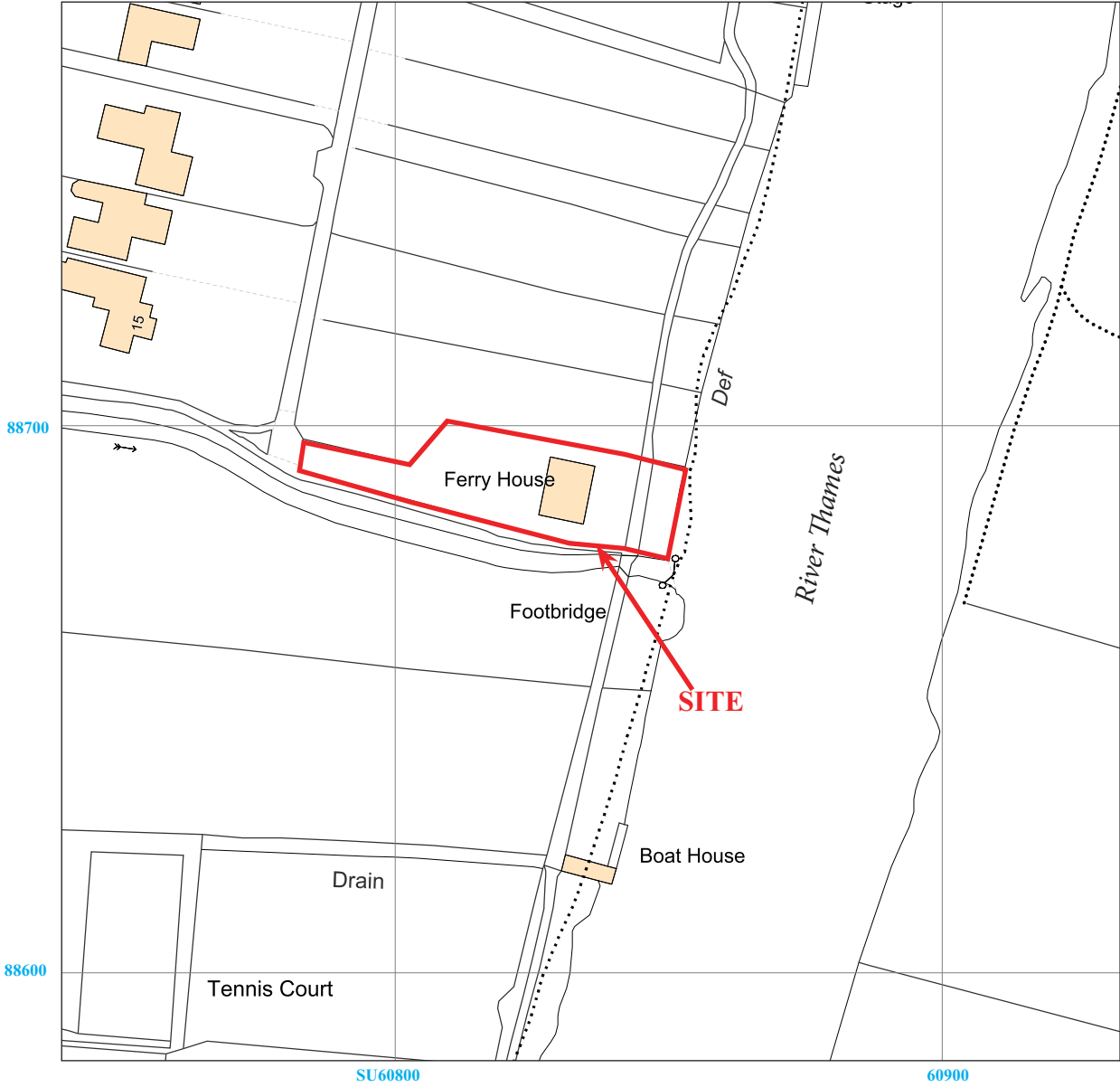
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wallingford and Oxfordshire.

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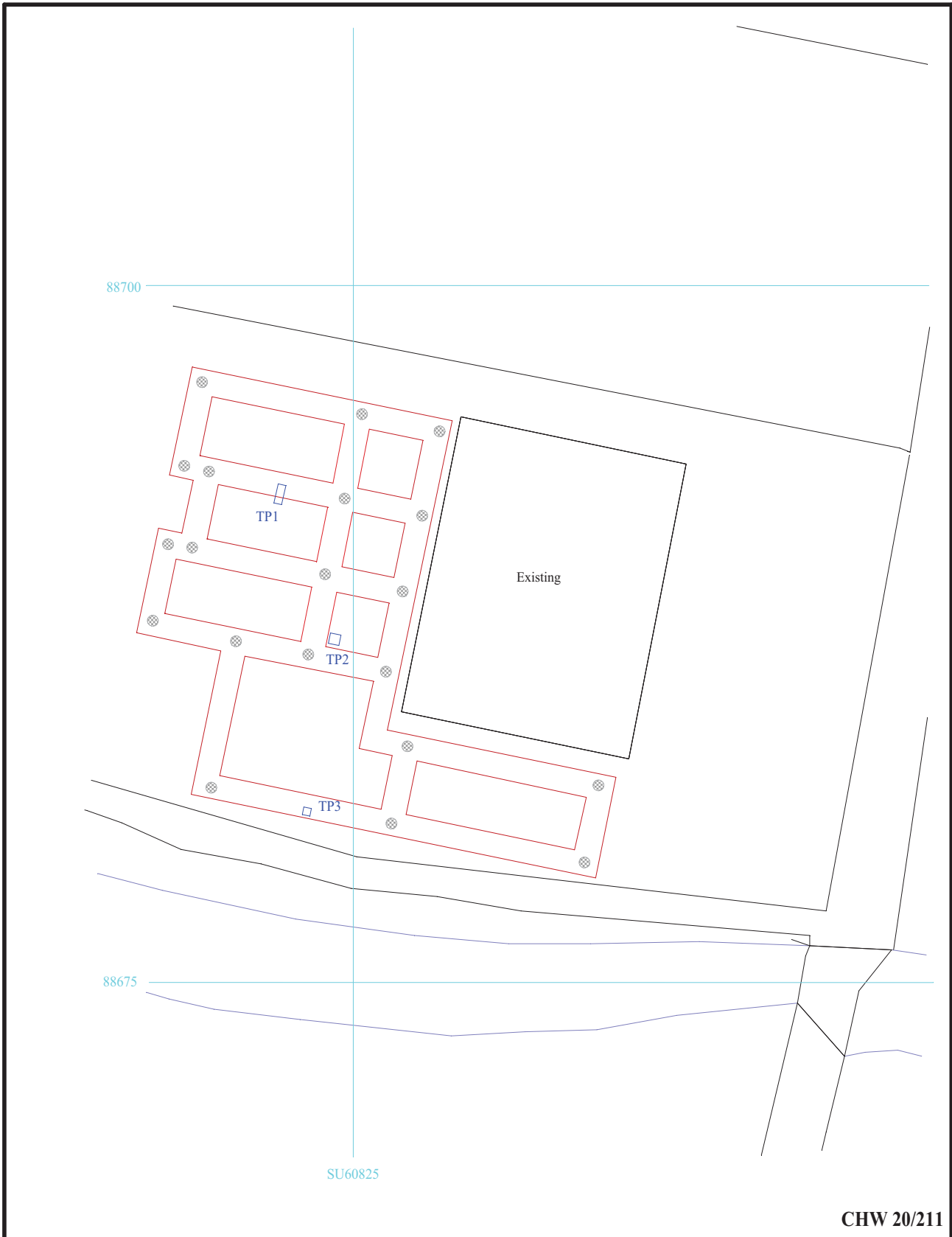
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Archaeological Watching Brief  
Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

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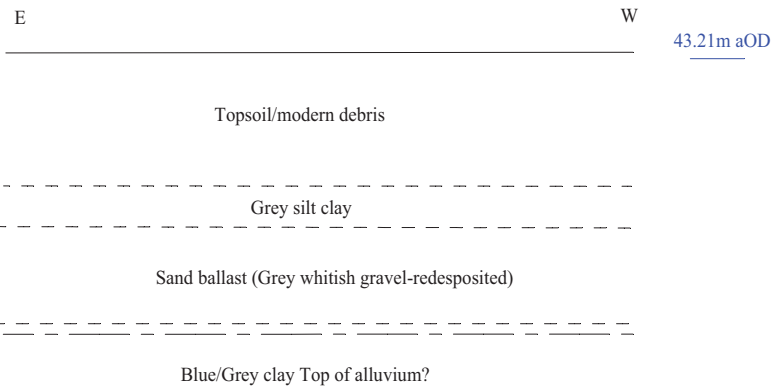
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Wallingford, Oxfordshire, 2021  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Detail of observed areas.





CHW 20/211

**Chalmore Hole Ferry House, Chalmore Gardens,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire, 2021  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Location of test pits 1 and 2 with Garden, looking North East.



Plate 2. Representative section, looking South West, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

CHW 20/211

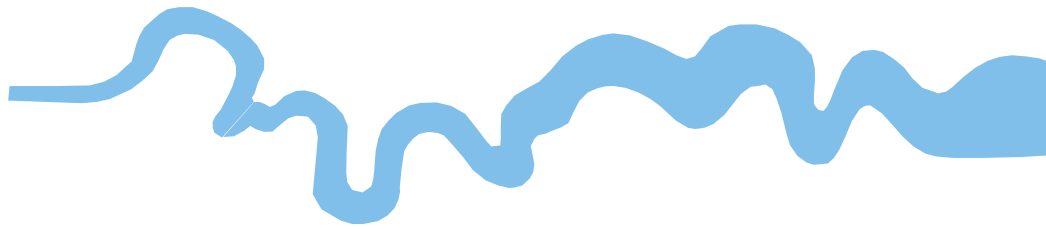
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Archaeological Watching Brief  
Plates 1 and 2.**

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## TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





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