

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**New Car Port, Rear of 24 High Street, Drayton,
Abingdon, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Muddin

Site Code: HSD21/94

(SU 4778 9410)

New Car Port, Rear of 24 High Street, Drayton, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Ashmere Homes Limited**

by Andrew Munding

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HSD 21/94

June 2021

Summary

Site name: New Car Port, Rear of 24 High Street, Drayton, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 4778 9405

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 27th May 2021

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Andrew Muddin

Site code: HSD 21/94

Summary of results: Observations during excavation of the footings for a new car port were undertaken. This recorded a single undated ditch.

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

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	Steve Preston ✓ 22.06.21

New Car Port, Rear of 24 High Street, Drayton, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Munding

Report 21/94

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out for a new Car Port, Rear 24 High Street, Drayton, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (SU 4778 9405(Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Shaun Dominic, of Ashmere Homes Ltd, The Old Goal, Abingdon, OX12 8NE.

Planning permission (21/V0357/FUL) has been granted by the Vale of the White Horse District Council for the construction of a two-storey car port, with office space. This is located on the edge of the curtilage of a 19th century farm. It is adjacent to a brick cart shed that is in the process of being converted to a residence (20/V3299/FUL), which this new car port will serve. Due to the location next to a barn of this farm, and areas of archaeological potential, including the adjacent site of an archaeological evaluation and excavation, an archaeological watching brief has been requested as conditions on the permission (condition 3 and 4).

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. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Steven Weaver, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service and based on a brief by supplied by him (Weaver 2021). The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Munding on 27th May 2021 the site code is HSD 21/97.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south of the High Street frontage in the village of Drayton (Figs 1 and 2). Number 24 High Street is a Listed Building (Grade II, 1368070). The underlying geology comprises Coombe deposits (silt, sand and clay) overlying 2nd Terrace Gravel of the River Thames (BGS 1971). The site has been newly fenced to enclose the area from the west and north (Fig.2). The height of the site is at c. 60m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in the brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Weaver 2021), which notes the site's position relative to archaeological works during the recent redevelopment of adjacent areas. Archaeological evaluation and subsequent excavation identified evidence of a medieval settlement, boundaries and a possible post-structure, that all predate the Post-Medieval/Modern structures on the frontage. They were broadly dated between the 10th-12th century (Brady *et al* 2019). The fronting property was once Whitehorn's Farmhouse (No.24), and is Grade II listed (1368070). Outbuildings, probably of 18th century date, survive in the south (and mostly north of this development) include a cart shed which lies to the immediate south-east.

The village, has late Saxon origins and is documented in Domesday Book as *Draitune* (Williams and Martin 2002). Extensive excavations have taken place in advance of modern development in the village; e.g., north of High Street (Hull 1999; Challinor *et al.* 2004; Esteves 2018), which uncovered discrete features of Neolithic and Bronze Age date within later medieval settlement evidence and earthworks. Stock enclosures and droveways have also been recorded, representing later enclosures west and north of Church Lane (Anthony and Taylor 2006; Munding 2020).

Sites and finds of earlier periods are present in surrounding areas with a series of cropmarks visible from the air off Milton Road including a Neolithic *cursus* monument, Bronze Age barrows and an extensive early Saxon 'royal' settlement with halls and sunken-featured buildings. (Benson and Miles 1974; Barclay *et al* 2003, 67; Brennan and Hamerow 2015).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved the monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks such as the observation of soil stripping and ground reduction and the excavation of foundation and service trenches as necessary.

Results

Foundation trenches

The excavation of the foundation trenches was undertaken with a small 360° mechanical excavator, fitted with a 0.68m wide bladed bucket, under archaeological supervision. Spoilheaps were monitored for finds (Fig. 3; Pl. 1). The groundworks comprised three completely excavated sides and a south-eastern trench not dug to a complete

circuit (Fig. 3). The trenches were dug to a depth of 1.08m. The stratigraphy revealed comprised topsoil, which contained a modest quantity of limestone and red brick fragments in a dark grey sandy silt matrix to a depth of 0.29m, overlying a reddish, grey-brown sandy silt subsoil to a depth of 0.43m. Below this lay the natural geology which was generally reached at a depth of 0.43m across all the footing trenches.

In the southern footing trench at a depth of 0.3m the top fill of a ditch was uncovered, which had a drainage pipe at a depth of 0.8m following its eastern edge (Figs 3 and 4). This 2.2m wide ditch was aligned NW–SE and was mostly filled with a single dark grey silt clay containing flecks of charcoal. It was 1.15m deep. The density of charcoal increased to the base of the feature at 0.82m (Pl. 2). None of the three layers that formed the ditch infill contained datable finds.

Two further drainage pipes were also noted cutting the backfilled ditch.

Finds

The majority of the material found in excavated deposits was red brick fragments, occasional fragments of 19th-century blue and white transfer-printed ‘china’ were noted. None were of archaeological note.

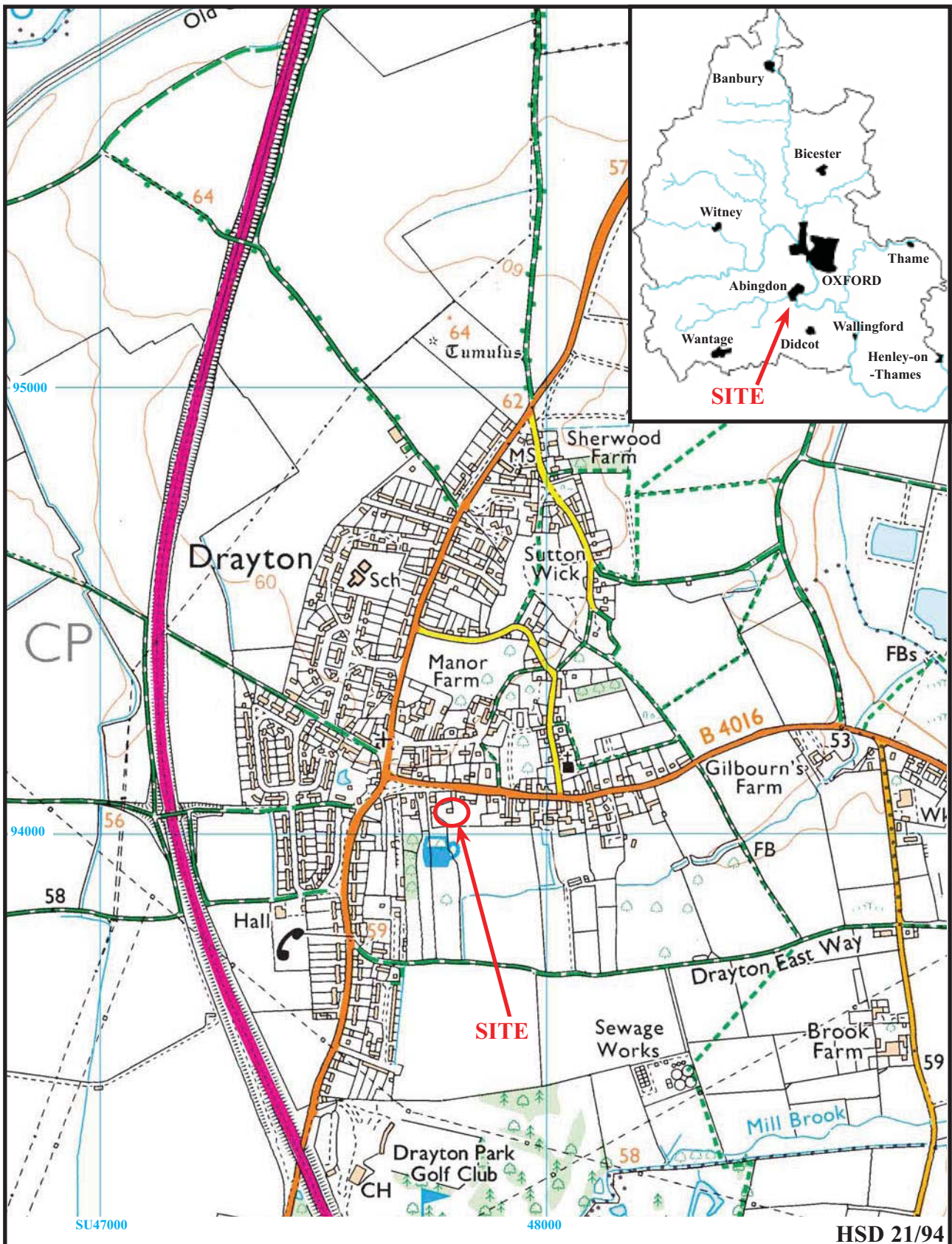
Conclusion

Despite this site’s location, close to an area of recorded archaeological deposits and within the historic core of the village, no deposits nor artefacts of certain archaeological interest were encountered but an undated ditch was revealed.

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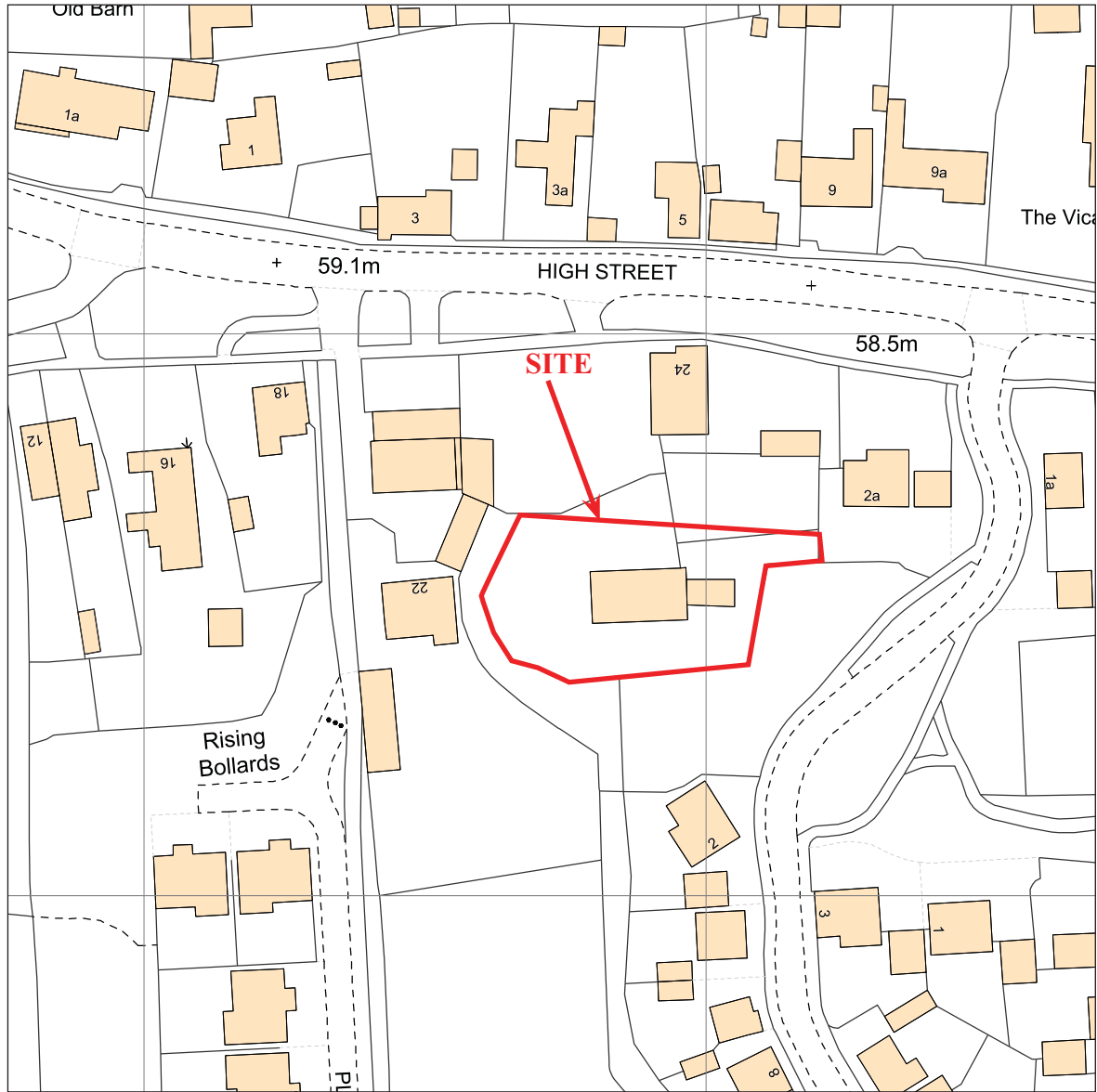


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Figure 1. Location of site within Drayton and Oxfordshire.

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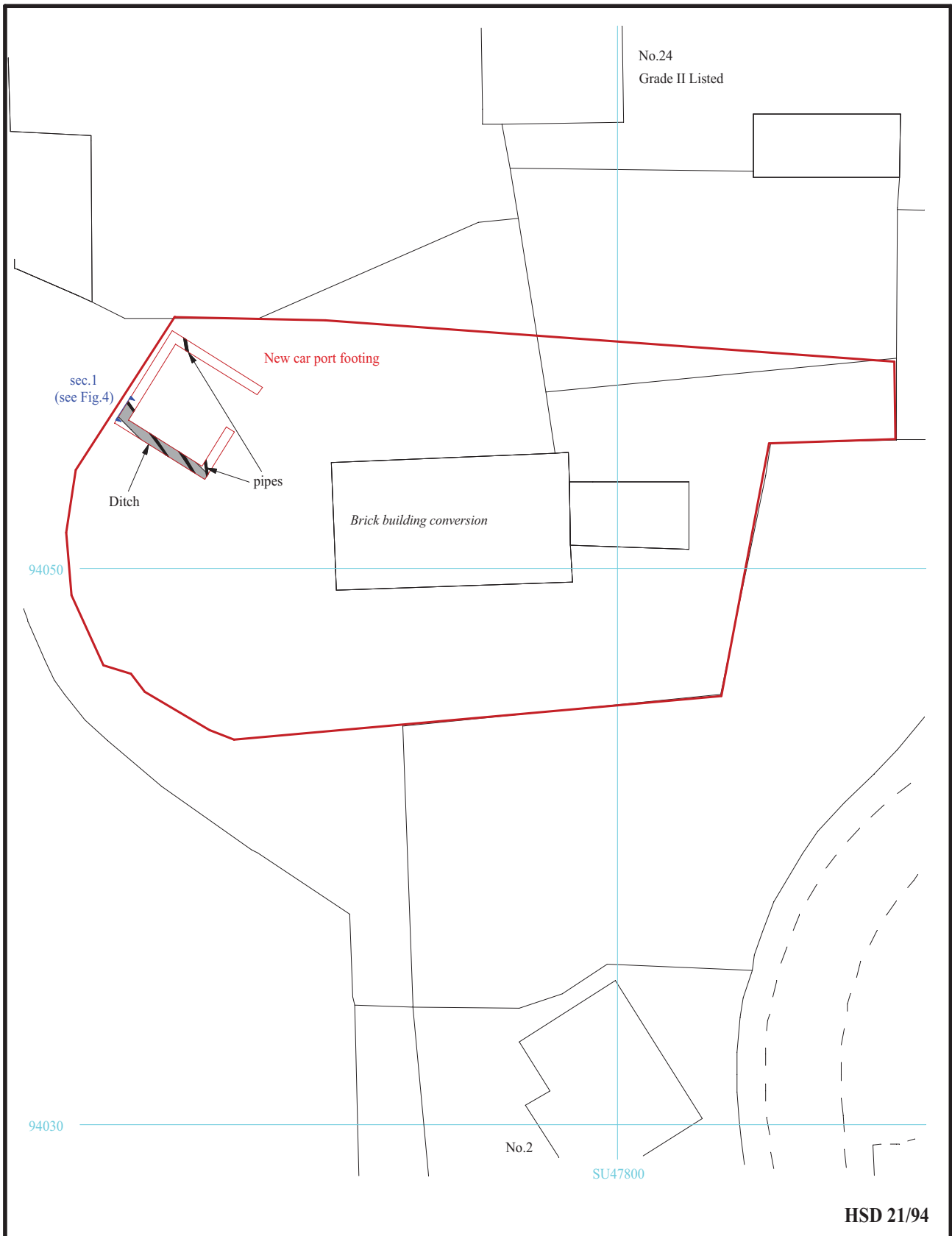
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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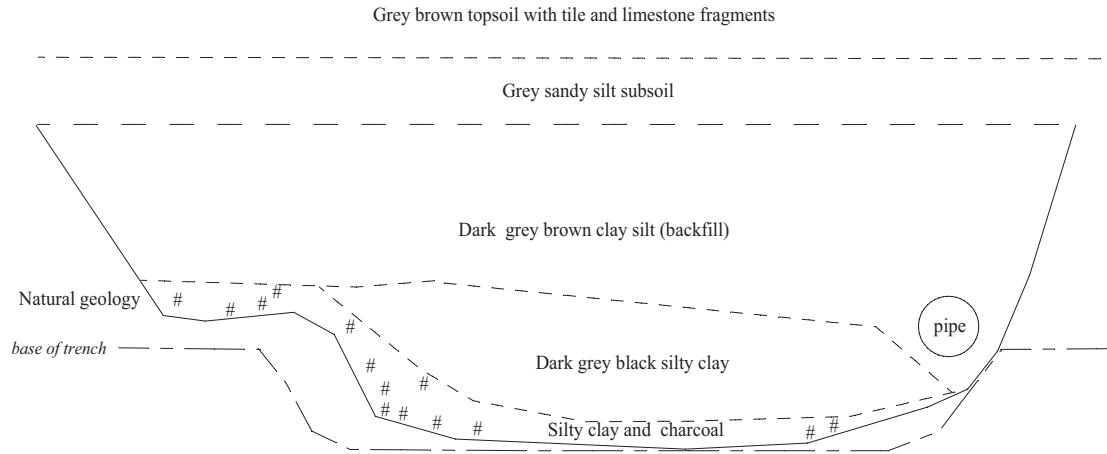
Figure 3. Location of observed area.



SW

NE

60m aOD



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Drayton, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, 2021
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. North West corner section, showing cut of modern drain.



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Plate 1. Completed excavation of footing, looking North West, Scales: 1m x2.



Plate 2. Drainage ditch in North West corner, South East facing section,
Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

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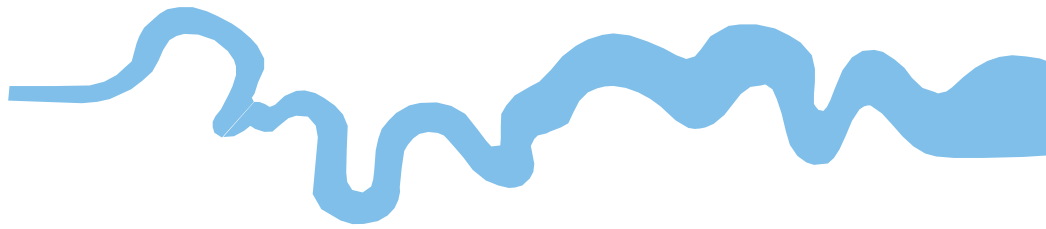
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Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 1 and 2.**

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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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