

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**52 Gainsborough Green,  
Abingdon, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Andy Muddin**

**Site Code: GGA21/185**

**(SU 4895 9620)**

# **52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon, Oxfordshire**

## **An Archaeological Watching Brief for XP Property Investments**

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code GGA 21/185

**February 2022**

## Summary

**Site name:** 52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 4894 9620

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 31st January to 1st February 2022

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Muddin

**Site code:** GGA 21/185

**Area of site:** 48 sq m

**Summary of results:** Excavations for a new footing were observed as part of works to extend to the east side of the property. A test pit, which was positioned centrally within the areas to be excavated established the natural geology was at 0.6m deep. The footing trench was excavated to a depth no greater than 1m deep. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading, will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course, and the digital archive submitted to the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:  
[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 11.02.22
	Steve Preston ✓ 11.02.22

# 52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Report 21/185

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 5JN (SU 4894 9620) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Lily Parkinson, Technical Property Manager for XP Property Investments Ltd (London and Home Counties), 52b Bernard Street, St. Albans, AL3 5QN.

Planning permission (P21/V0270/FUL) has been gained from Vale of White Horse District Council for the construction of a two-storey development on the east side of the extant property. The works included the demolition of the previous eastern extension of the property and an outbuilding to the south, but the latter only involved shallow removal of an existing slab foundation. The consent is subject to two conditions (3 and 4) relating to archaeology. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, an archaeological watching brief is required during any groundworks taking place on the site.

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, based on a brief prepared by Mr Steven Weaver, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Weaver 2021) who also subsequently approved the specification. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin, between the 31st January and 1st February 2022, and the site code is GGA 21/185.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course, and a digital report submitted to the Archaeology Data Service.

## Location, topography and geology

Gainsborough Green is located in a suburban part of southern Abingdon, south west of its historic centre and west of the River Thames (Fig.1), with No.52 being an end-terrace adjacent to the junction for Nicolson House and Gainsborough Green, positioned to its south west (Fig.2). The site lies just over 1km south west of the town centre, but also c.600m south of the course of the River Ock and c.700m east of the River Thames. The site is located on Northmoor Member (Sand and Gravel) and lies at a height of c.52m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Mr Steven Weaver of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Weaver 2021). In summary, the potential of the site stems from its location close to the discovery of a large early Saxon cemetery which was excavated in 1935, that contained 82 cremation and 119 inhumation burials (Leeds and Harden 1936). The site was initially identified from sewer works establishing the course of Saxton Road, with the location of further burials and a central urn seen to be within a prehistoric funerary barrow monument (Leeds 1936). The nearest burials are *c.*70m north of the current site, with the density of burials first established during the construction of the present housing estate.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved continual monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and include observation of surface stripping, ground reduction to the top of the relevant horizon and the excavating of foundation trenches, service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work as necessary.

## **Results**

The works occurred to the east of the extant property (Fig.3, Pl.1). A single test pit was excavated centrally to the new extension area (Pl. 2). This was 1.7m x 0.7m x 0.6m deep, to the top of the natural geology. The upper overburden was a brown grey sandy silt, containing modern building rubble to a depth of 0.28m. Below this was a reddish-brown clayey silt, that contained no datable finds. This reached a depth of 0.6m. At this depth the natural geology, a friable, light yellow grey sand and gravel was exposed but not excavated further within this test pit.

The modern overburden, a brown grey sandy silt containing demolition rubble, was reduced within the new footprint to a depth of 0.25m. Monitoring of the footings, around the edge of this reduced area, exposed similar stratigraphy to that of the test pit. Under the site overburden was a reddish-brown clayey silt, which was at no greater depth than 0.6m in section. This was the interface with the natural deposit, and deemed the possible archaeological horizon. Two ceramic drains, one in the south west adjacent to the existing single storey extension and one perpendicular to the east side trench. Both were uncovered cutting to a depth of 0.45m deep in

section. No archaeological deposits existed within the excavated area, (Fig. 3), and no other cut features were observed. The final depth of excavation varied slightly between 0.85m and 1m deep (Fig. 4; Pl. 3).

## **Finds**

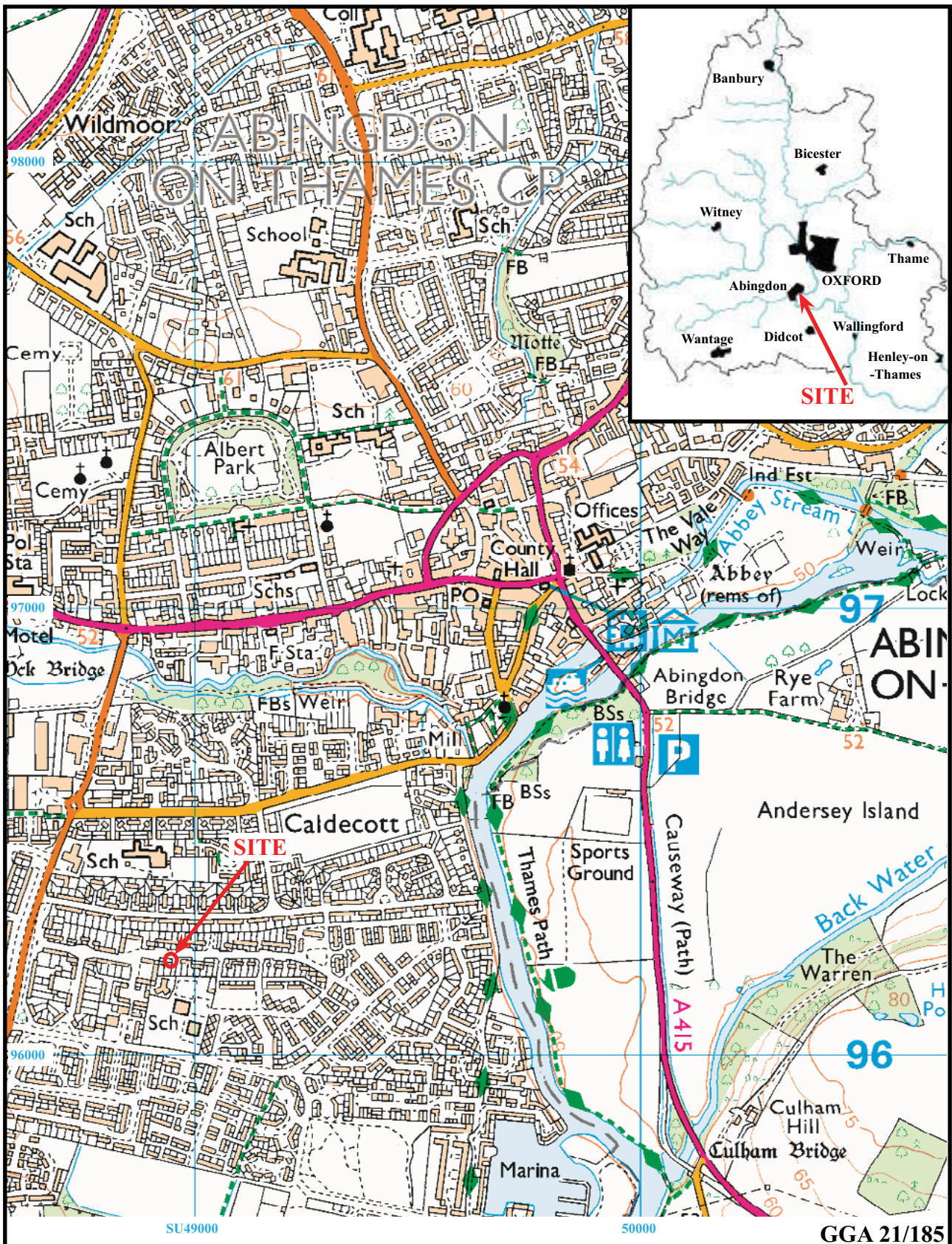
No finds of archaeological interest were encountered.

## **Conclusion**

Excavations for a new footing were observed as part of works to extend to the east side of the property. A test pit, which was positioned centrally within the areas to be excavated established the natural geology was at 0.6m deep. The footing trench was excavated to a final depth no greater than 1m deep. No archaeological deposits or finds were encountered.

## **References**

- BGS, 1971, '*British Geological Survey*', 1:63 360, Sheet 253 (Abingdon), Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Leeds, E T, 1936, 'Rounds Barrows and Ring-Ditches of Oxfordshire and Berkshire', *Oxoniensia*, **1**, 7–23
- Leeds, E T and Harden, B T, 1936, *The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Abingdon, Berkshire*, Ashmolean Museum Monogr, Oxford
- NPPF 2019, '*National Planning Policy Framework*', Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Govt, London
- Weaver, S, 2021, '52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon: Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief', Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford



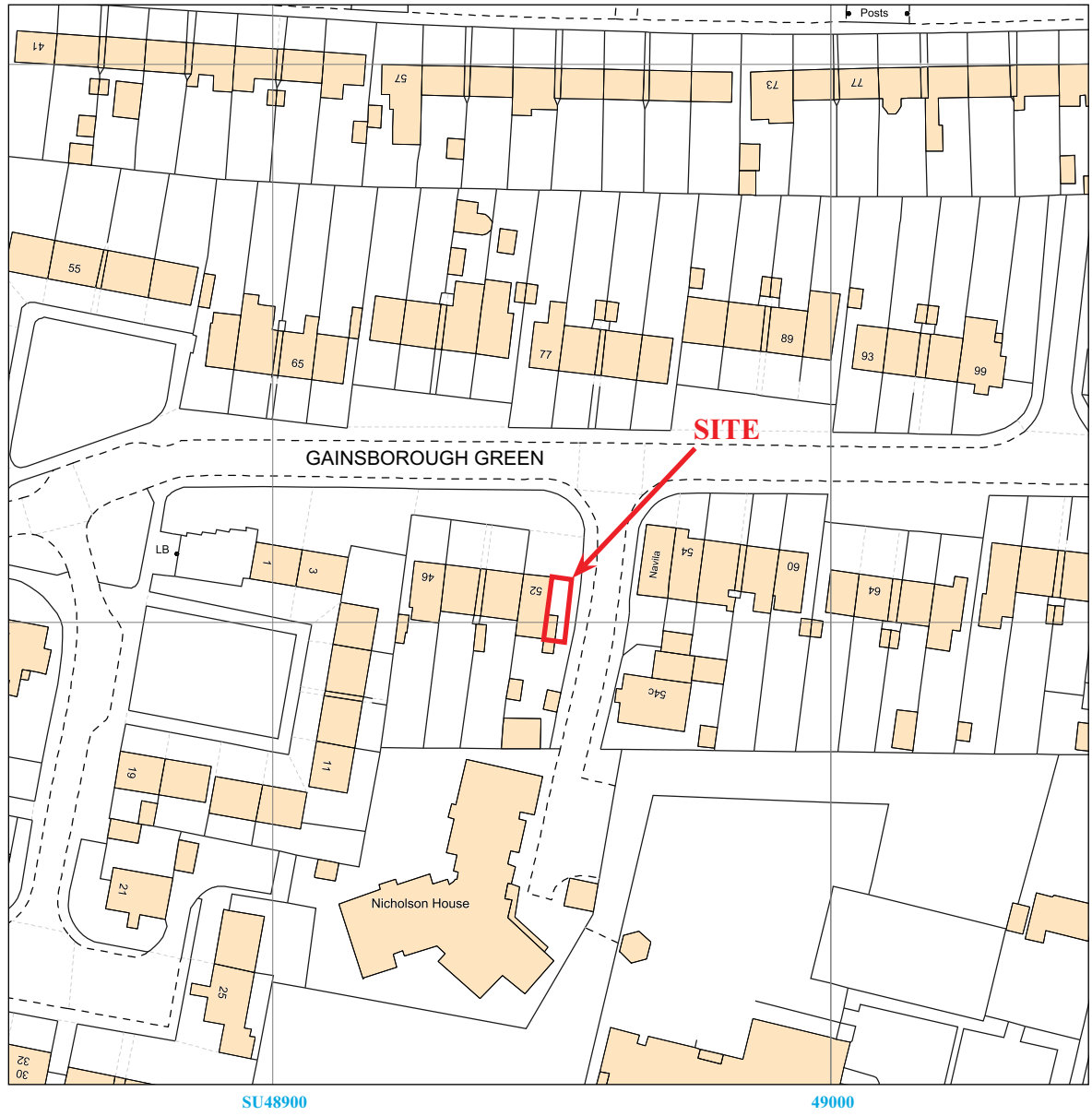
**52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon,  
Oxfordshire, 2022**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Abingdon and Oxfordshire.

Reproduced under licence from Ordnance Survey Explorer Digital mapping at 1:12500  
Crown Copyright reserved

THAMES VALLEY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
SERVICES



GGA 21/185



**52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon,  
Oxfordshire, 2022**

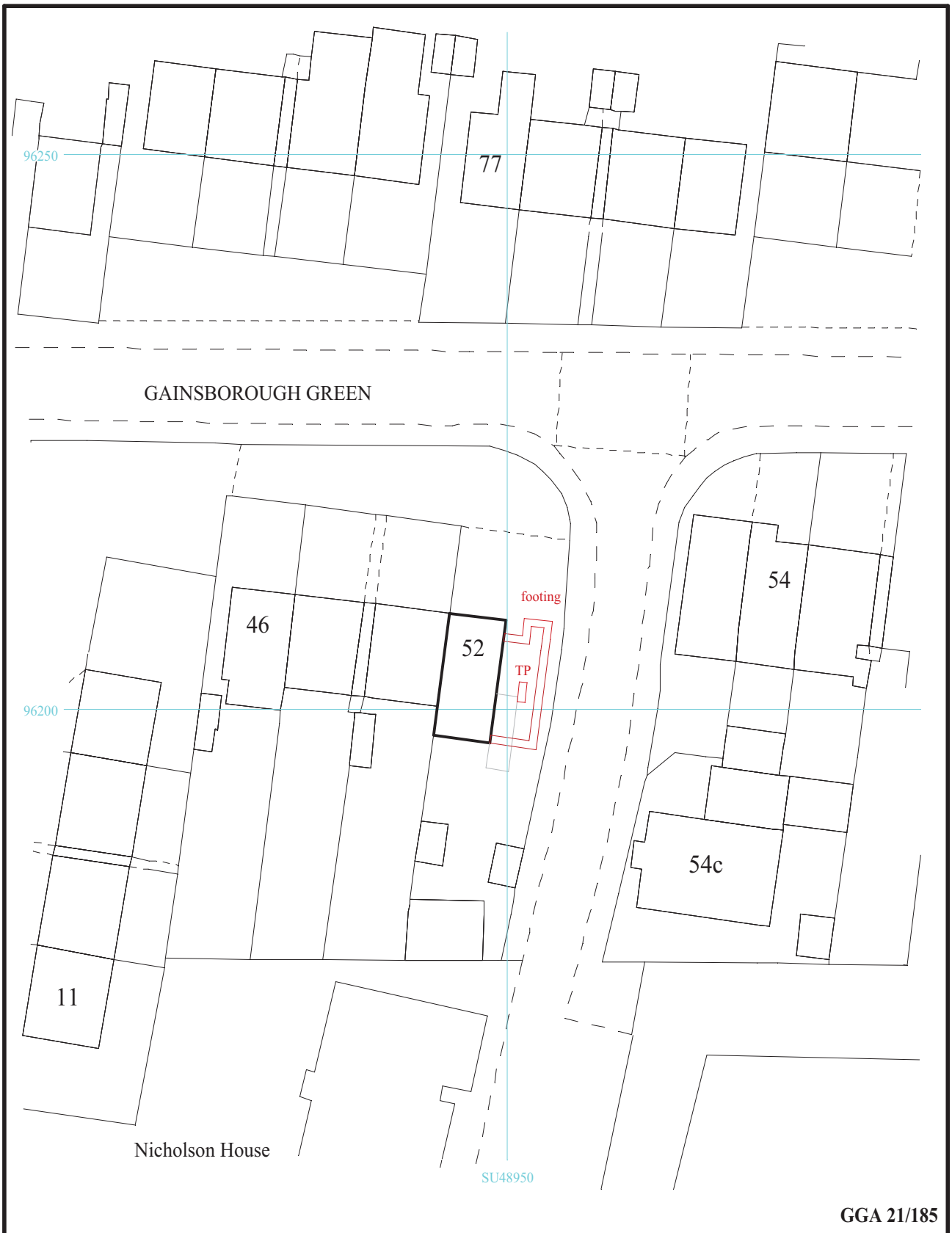
**Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Gainborough Green.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.  
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:1250

THAMES VALLEY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
SERVICES





**52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon,  
Oxfordshire, 2022  
Archaeological Evaluation**

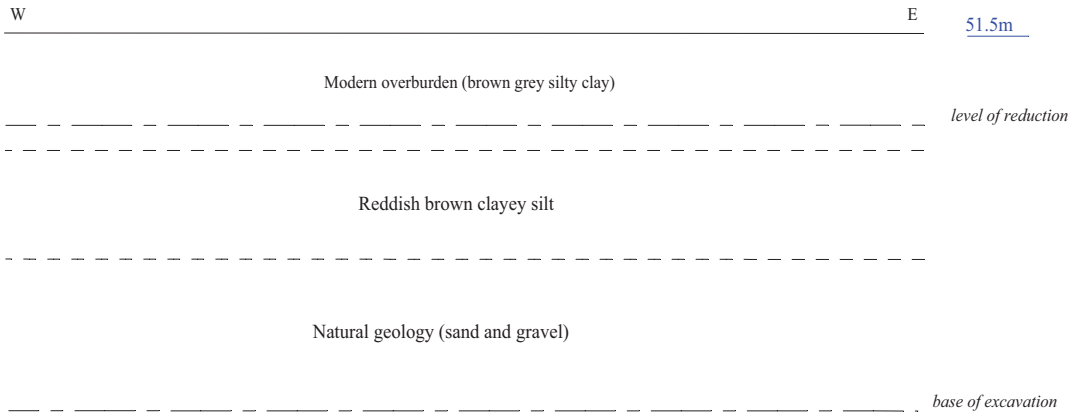
Figure 3. Location of areas observed



THAMES VALLEY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
 SERVICES

GGA 21/185

*Representative section of footing*



GGA 21/185

**52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon,  
Oxfordshire, 2022  
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Representative section.



THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



Plate 1. Front elevation of house, working area on left.



Plate 2. Test pit, central to area, looking East,  
Scales: 1m, 0.3m.



Plate 3. North footing section, looking north,  
Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

GGA 21/185

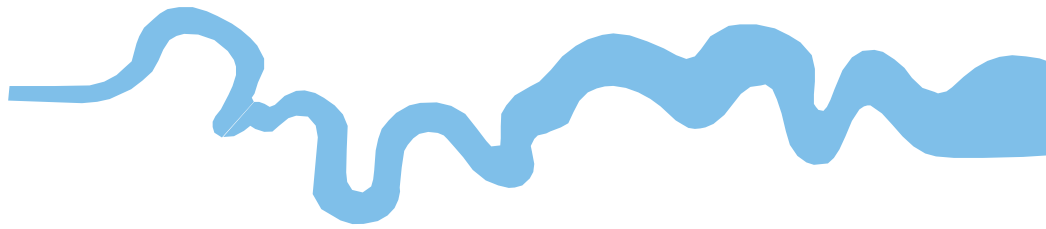
52 Gainsborough Green, Abingdon,  
Oxfordshire, 2022  
Archaeological Watching Brief  
Plates 1 - 3.

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

## 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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,  
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,  
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552  
Email: [tvas@tvas.co.uk](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**

***Offices in:  
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent and Ennis (Ireland)***