

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
S E R V I C E S

**Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane,
Wargrave, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson

Site Code: GCW11/26

(SU 7843 7864)

Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs Whitehead

by Tim Dawson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code GCW11/26

August 2011

Summary

Site name: Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7843 7864

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 10th June 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: GCW 11/26

Area of site: 9 sq m

Summary of results: A gully containing one sherd of medieval pottery was found.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate repository in due course.

*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 All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: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.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 18.08.11
	Steve Preston✓ 18.08.11

Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson

Report 11/26

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire (SU 7843 7864) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mrs Shona Whitehead, Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire.

Planning permission (F/2010/2822) has been granted by Wokingham Council to construct a new extension and a detached motorcycle store. The consent is subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a continuous archaeological watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Paul Falcini of Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson on 10th June 2011 and the site code is GCW 11/26.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate repository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the western edge of the village of Wargrave, c.5km south of Henley-on-Thames. The river Thames flows in a northerly direction c.100m to the north-west of the site (Fig. 2). The area is currently occupied by Grebe Cottage, a two-storey house built in 1984, with a garden consisting predominantly of lawn extending to the west. To the east Ferry Lane runs north-south while housing and gardens border the site on the remaining three sides. The site slopes gently down to the north-west, towards the Thames. The underlying geology is described as Valley Gravel (BGS 1946) however this was only encountered on site mixed with a sandy clay. The site is at a height of c.36m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the historic core of Wargrave as well as being located within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley. Wargrave was possibly first documented in late

Saxon times (early 11th century) but was recorded in Domesday Book as a Royal manor. It was granted a market in 1218 and was referred to as a borough in 1222, and is possibly a medieval town, though details of this are vague. In any event, its urban status was short-lived (Astill 1978). Field survey and aerial photography to the south-west of the site has revealed a range of sites of earlier prehistoric, Roman and Saxon date (Ford 1997).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was expected to involve monitoring of foundation trench digging for the new structures.

In practice only the footing trenches for the house extension were observed as it was decided that the motorcycle store would be constructed using a concrete slab which would not penetrate the ground to a depth sufficient to impinge on archaeologically relevant levels.

The excavation of the foundation trench for the extension by mini-digger was observed and the spoil removed was monitored for finds. The trench was easily accessible thus enabling the hand-cleaning and excavation of possible archaeological deposits.

Results

The foundation trench was excavated to a depth of 0.75m at the eastern end and 0.95m at the western due to the local topography. It was 0.70m wide with the north-south run being 2.70m long and the east-west 3.20m (Fig. 3, Pl. 1). The stratigraphy exposed in the walls of the trench consisted of 0.32m of topsoil overlying 0.58m of disturbed subsoil and the natural sandy clay and gravel geology (Fig. 4, Pl. 2). Several fragments of modern china, brick and tile were identified in the subsoil which suggests that, due to the close proximity to the house, the ground was disturbed during a previous construction event. These modern finds were not retained.

A linear feature was observed extending north-south along the full western edge of the foundation trench. This was cleaned and a 1.40m-long slot (1) excavated in its northern end to determine its extent and to recover finds for dating purposes. The feature appeared to be a gully with the exposed section being 0.22m wide and 0.23m deep. Due to the position of the gully in the trench it was not possible to determine its full width (Fig. 3). It was filled with soft dark black-brown sandy silt (52) with a few small flint inclusions from which was extracted a single sherd of medieval pottery (see below).

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

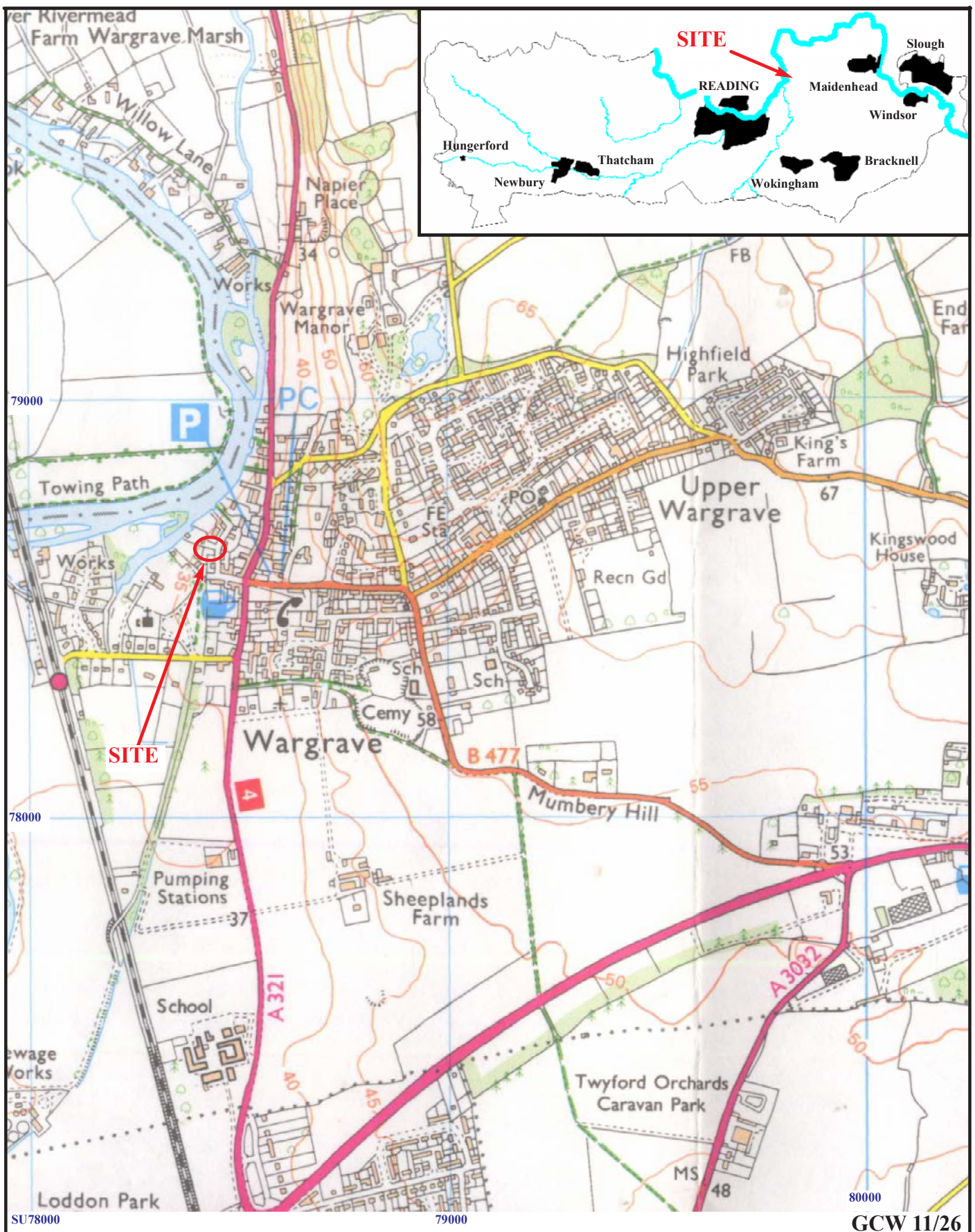
A single sherd of medieval pottery weighing 17g occurred in context 52. It is 'M40' type ware, and dates from the late 11th to the 14th century (Hinton 1973). This ware has possible kiln sources at Camley Gardens near Maidenhead and Denham in Buckinghamshire (Pike 1965; Mellor 1994, 86). It is a common find at sites in south Oxfordshire and Berkshire. The sherd is unglazed, and has the vertical combing on the outside of the body which is typical of the tradition. It is in very good condition, and appears reliably stratified.

Conclusion

The watching brief on the foundations of the extension at Grebe Cottage uncovered a single gully, possibly medieval in date, cut into the top of the natural geology. The full lateral extents of the feature were not determined due to the size of the foundation trench. Due to the presence of disturbed ground directly above the feature it is possible that it had been vertically truncated by a modern landscaping event, probably the construction of the current house in 1984. The gully lies parallel to Ferry Lane and may represent a property boundary. Although the evidence is necessarily very limited, the gully adds a little to an understanding of the topography of medieval Wargrave.

References

- Astill, G G, 1978, *Historic towns in Berkshire; an archaeological appraisal*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 2 Reading
- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1997, 'Loddon Valley (Berkshire) fieldwalking survey', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 75, (for 1994–7), 11–33
- Hinton, DA, 1973, 'M.40 Ware', *Oxoniensia* 38, 181–3
- Mellor, M, 1994, 'Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, 59, 17–217
- Pike, G, 1965, 'A medieval pottery kiln site on the Camley Gardens Estate, Maidenhead', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 62, 22–33
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich



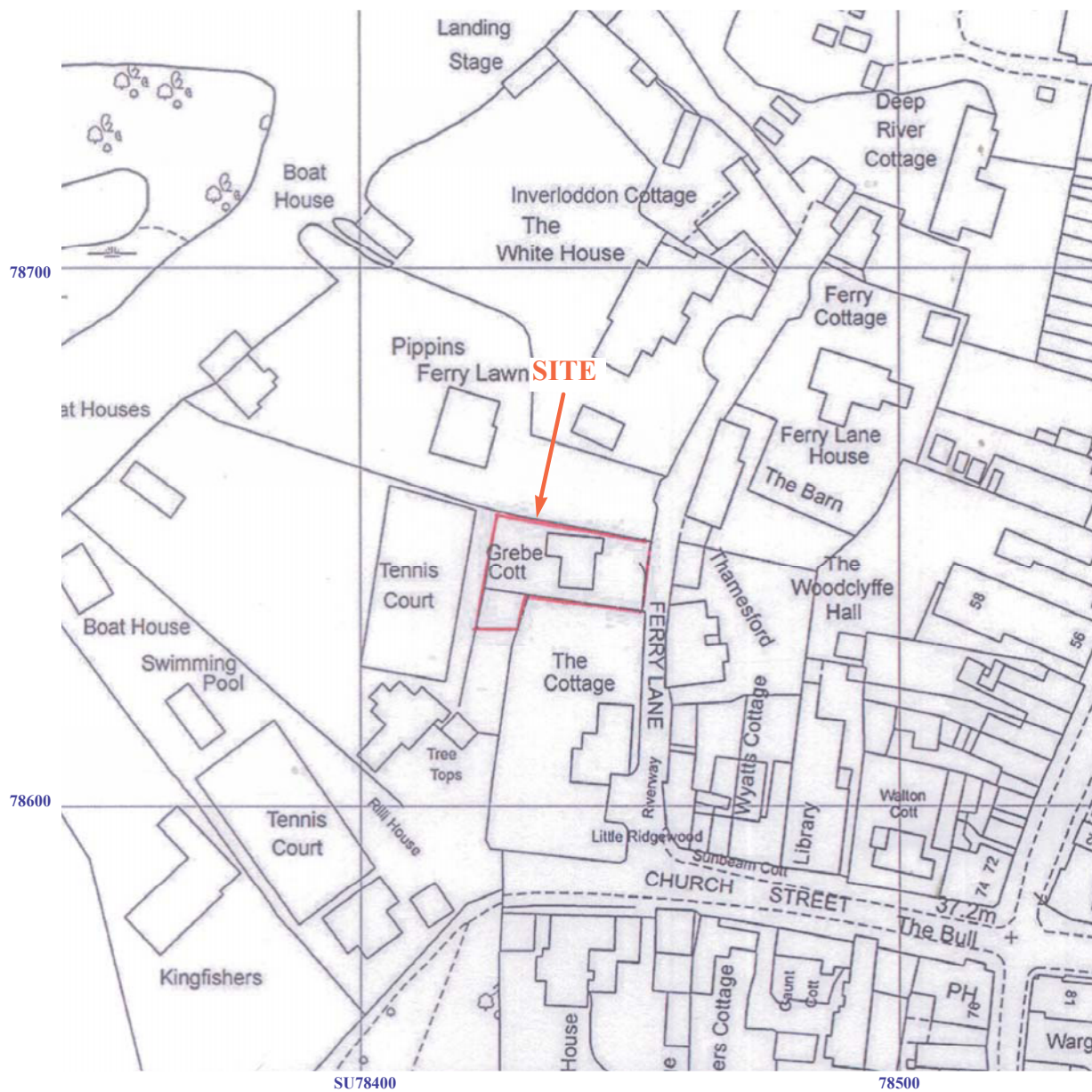
**Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire, 2011
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Wargrave and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 159 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

GCW 11/26



GCW 11/26

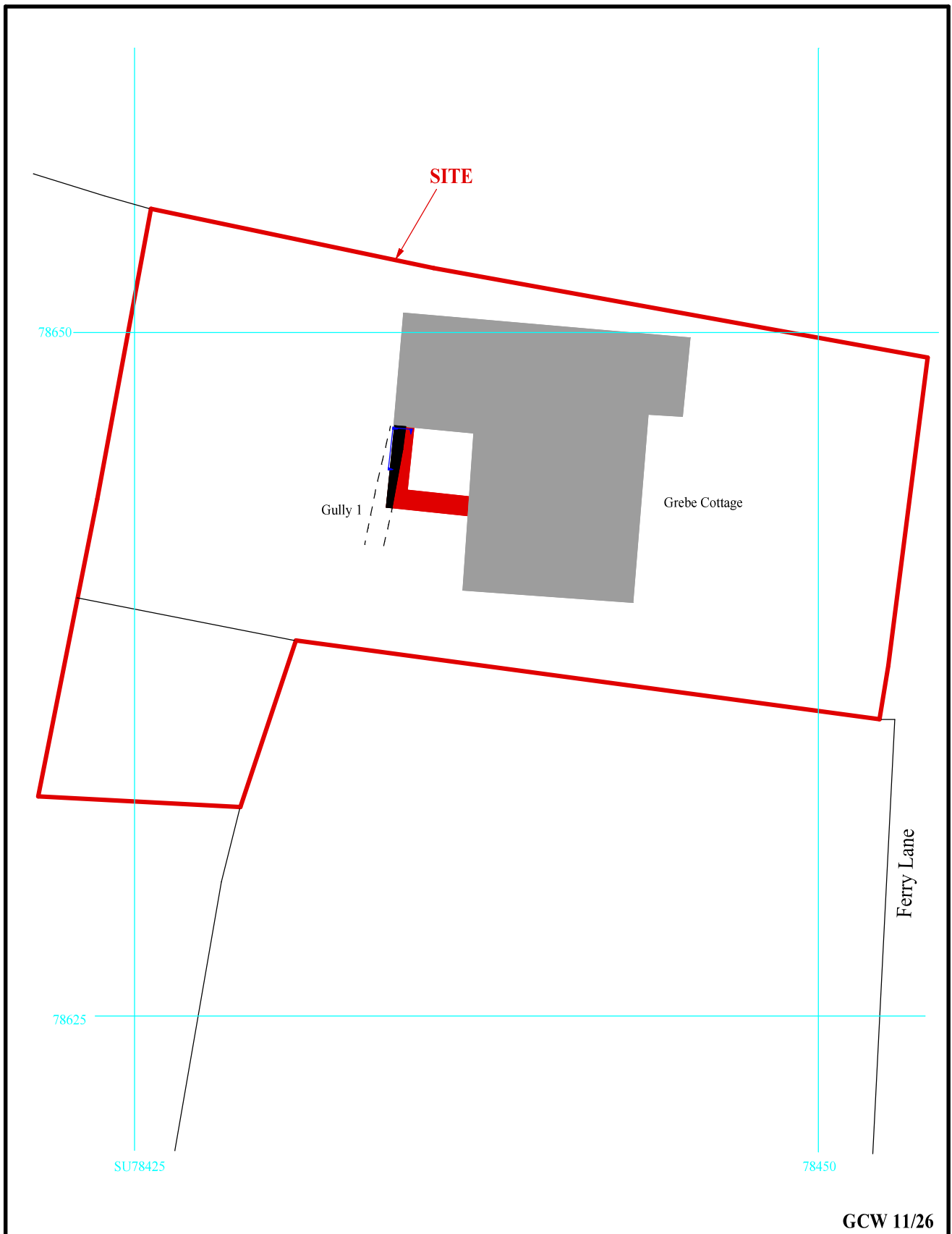


**Grebe Cottage, Ferry Road, Wargrave, Berkshire, 2011
Archaeological watching brief**

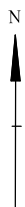
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Ferry Road.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale: 1:1250

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



GCW 11/26

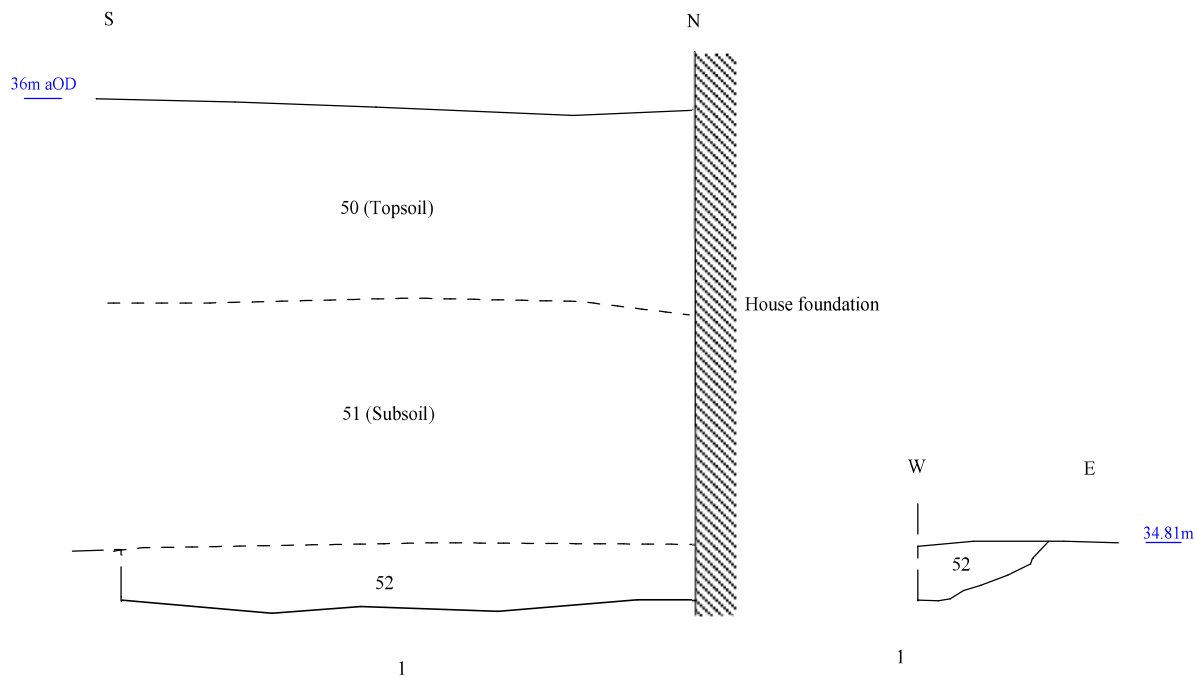


**Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire, 2011
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 3. Location of areas observed during watching brief.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



GCW 11/26

**Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire, 2011
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 4. Representative section.





Plate 1. House extension, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Gully 1, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

GCW 11/26

Grebe Cottage, Ferry Lane, Wargrave, Berkshire, 2011
Archaeological watching brief

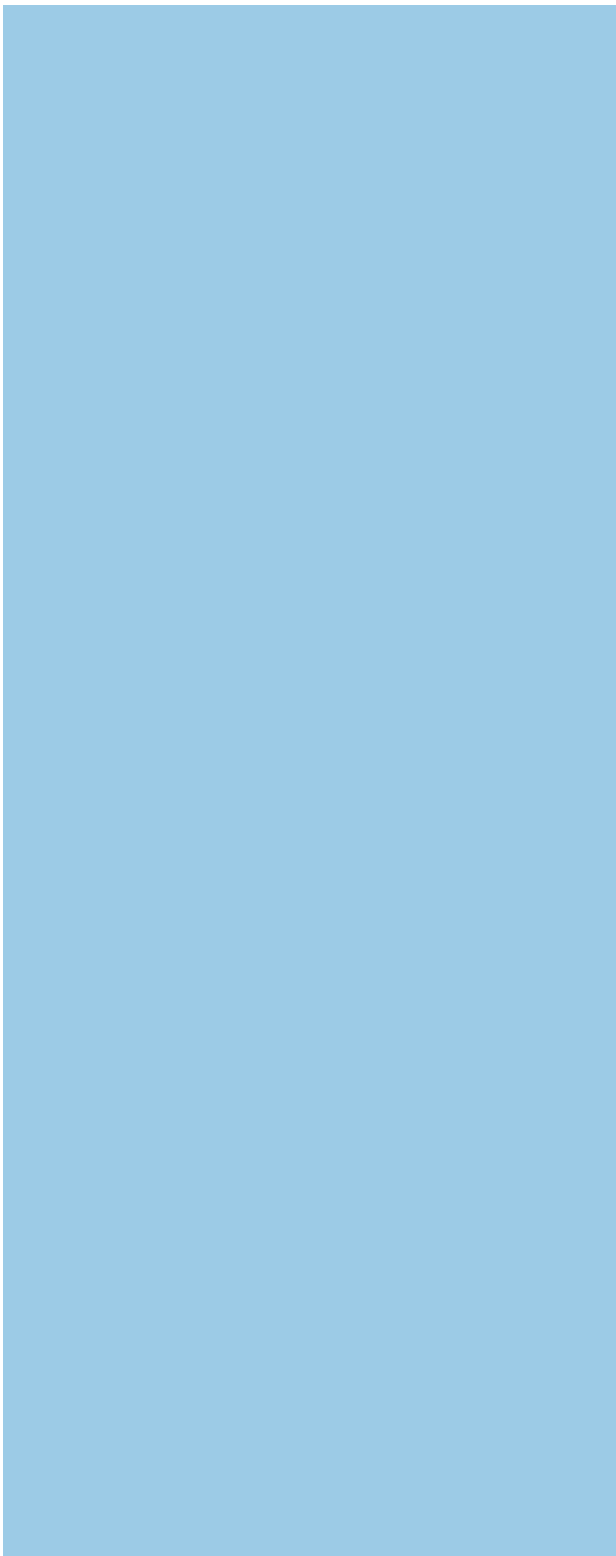
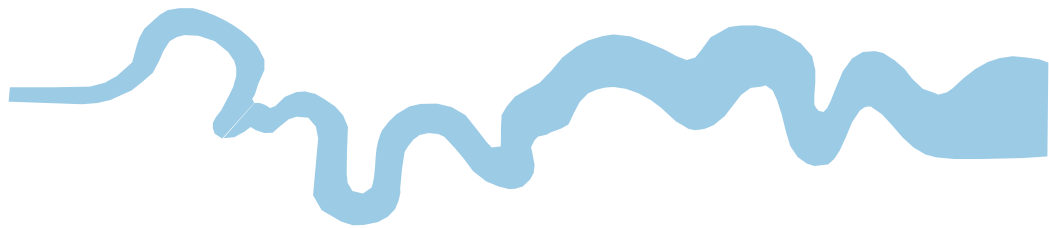
Plates 1 and 2.

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
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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,
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**