

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**New Care Home, Thames View,
Abingdon, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by James Lewis and Daniel Bray

Site Code: TVA10/125

(SU 5004 9723)

New Care Home, Thames View, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Healthcare Development Services Ltd**

by JamesLewisandDanielBray
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices
Ltd

SiteCodeTVA10/125

March 2012

Summary

Site name: New Care Home, Thames View, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5004 9723

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 13th May 2011 to 5th March 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisors: James Lewis, Daniel Bray

Site code: TVA 10/125

Summary of results: Most of the site had been deeply buried by modern made ground and few components of the foundations were deep enough to penetrate to the natural geology beneath. No deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded.

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

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 06.03.12 Steve Preston ✓ 06.03.12

New Care Home, Thames View, Abingdon, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by James Lewis and Daniel Bray

Report 10/125

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the site of a new care home being constructed at Thames View, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (SU 5004 9723) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr D Rowley, DWA Architects Ltd, 39 Blossom Street, York, YO24 1AQ on behalf of Healthcare Development Services Ltd, The Vintners House, Oxford Street, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, GL56 0LA.

Planning consent (ABG/21079) has been granted by the Vale of the White Horse District Council to construct a new care home on the site adjacent to Thames Valley Industrial Park. The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief produced by Mr Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Coddington 2010). In summary, it notes that the site lies within the historic core of Abingdon with various archaeological investigations having revealed finds and deposits from the Iron Age through to the Medieval period. Due to the potential of encountering archaeological deposits, the consent was subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires a watching a 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 District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Hugh Coddington on behalf of the District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray, James Lewis, and Andrew Muddin between 13th May 2011 and 3rd March 2012, and the site code is TVA 10/125.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the historic core of Abingdon approximately 500m to the east of the town centre (Fig. 1). To the north and west are industrial units and residential housing and the site itself was previously used as a storage warehouse. The south of the site is bounded by Abbey Stream next to which are the remains of the ruined abbey which lies on the banks of the River Thames (Fig. 2). The underlying geology of the site is described as

river terrace gravel (BSG 1971) but the geology observed was a yellow sandy clay. The site lies at about 54m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site lies just to the north of the site of Abingdon Abbey (St Mary's) which was founded in AD675 and re-founded in the 10th century (Munby *et al.* 1975). The abbey is a scheduled monument (SAM218). Fieldwork to the north-west revealed Iron Age ditches of defensive proportions suggesting the presence of a major Iron Age and Roman precursor to Abingdon (Allen 1991). Fieldwork on both the northern part of the development site and adjacent areas revealed a variety of archaeological deposits, including a series of ditches of Late Iron Age and Medieval date (OA 2005a and b). Other linear features were possibly watercourses or part of a Civil War earthwork. An evaluation to the west also revealed undated gullies lying beneath a buried soil containing Roman and medieval pottery (Ford 1997) though a subsequent watching brief on a part of this land only revealed modern made ground (Saunders 2001). A watching brief to the north-east of the Industrial Park also found little of archaeological interest (Hull 1997).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks in particular monitoring the removal of overburden, followed by monitoring of the excavation of foundation and service trenches and other deeply invasive features such as soakaways. Any archaeological deposits exposed were to be recorded but not further excavated unless threatened by the groundworks. Sufficient time was allowed to carry this out within the groundworks schedule.

Results

The watching brief comprised several components related to demolition, pre-construction and construction phases of the project.

Demolition and removal of ring beam (Fig. 3)

During the final stages of the demolition of the previous building, the removal of old ring beams was observed. From this inspection, it was found that the stratigraphy of the site consisted entirely of modern made ground down to a depth of 2m. No archaeological finds or deposits were recorded..

Test Pit 1 (Fig. 3)

A small test pit was excavated in the south-east corner of the site (Pl. 1). The area had been thoroughly disturbed during previous works and the excavation of the groundworks was observed down to a depth of 1.7m. The stratigraphy consisted of Tarmac and hard core 0.7m deep, which overlay a 1 metre depth of 20th-century dump material. The observation of this groundwork revealed no archaeological features.

Foundations (Fig. 4)

The excavation of foundation trenches to a depth of 0.90m and 1.00m wide was observed in the north part of the site. As observed in the southern parts of the site, the stratigraphy consisted of 0.40m of demolition rubble which overlaying modern made ground with the trenches not dug deep enough to observe the natural geology.

Lift Pit 1 (Figs 4 and 5)

Two lift pits were excavated and monitored, lift pit 1 being the northern of the two. The pit was rectangular and measured 3.50m by 4.70m and to a depth of 2.00m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.40m of demolition rubble overlying 1.60m of modern made ground. A 2m strip of natural yellow sandy clay aligned north-south was seen with modern truncation either side. No archaeological features were observed.

Lift pit 2

Lift Pit 2 was the more southerly of the two pits excavated (Fig. 4). This was rectangular, 4.50m by 5.20m and was excavated to a depth of 2.00m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.50m of demolition rubble overlying 1.50m of modern made ground. No natural geology was observed.

Finds

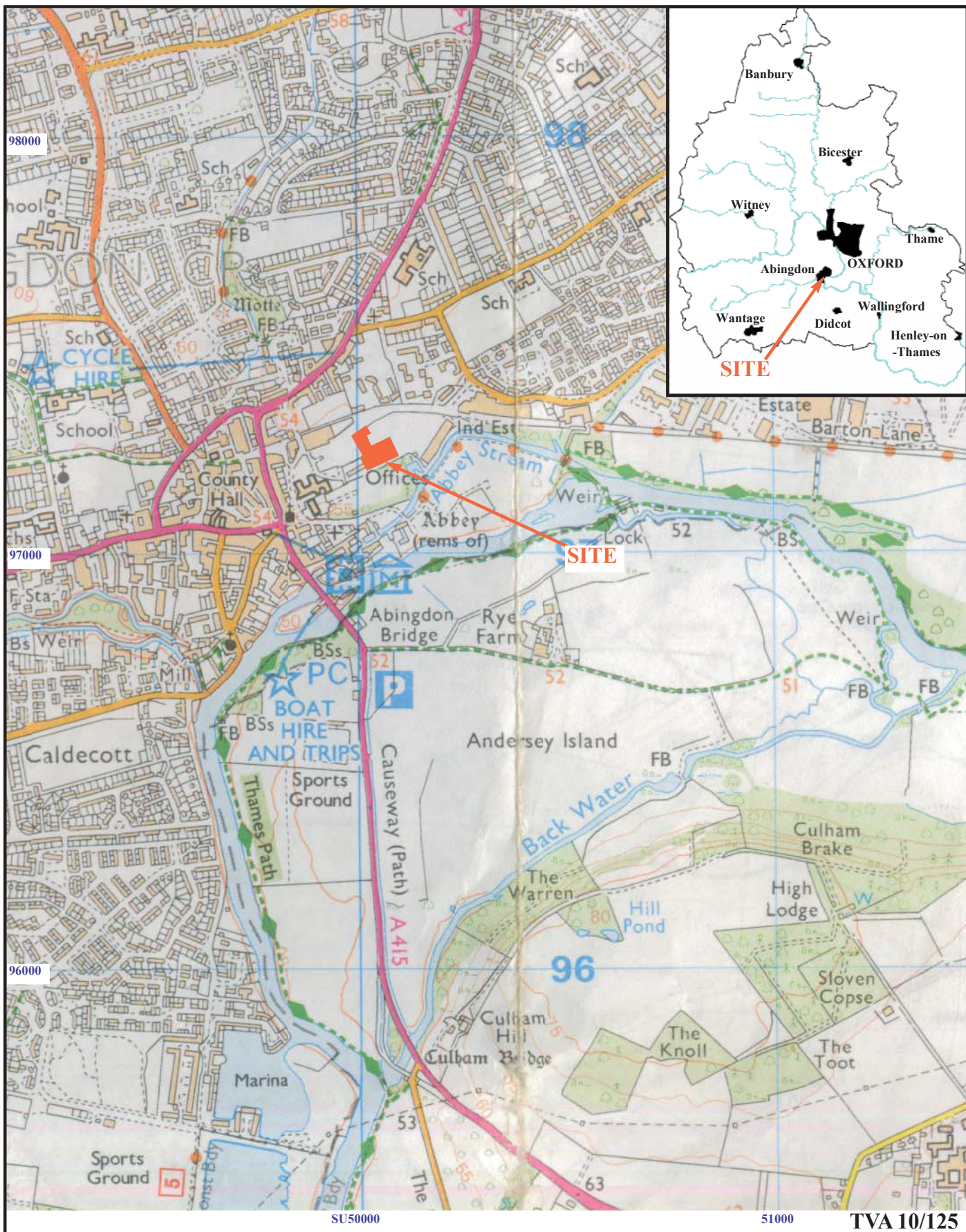
No finds of archaeological interest were recorded. Material of obviously 19th - 20th century date was recorded from the made ground comprising bricks, bottles and mass-produced transfer printed pottery but was not retained.

Conclusion

The watching brief revealed no archaeological deposits. Any potential archaeological features that might have been present appear to have been destroyed during previous building work which had thoroughly truncated the site.

References

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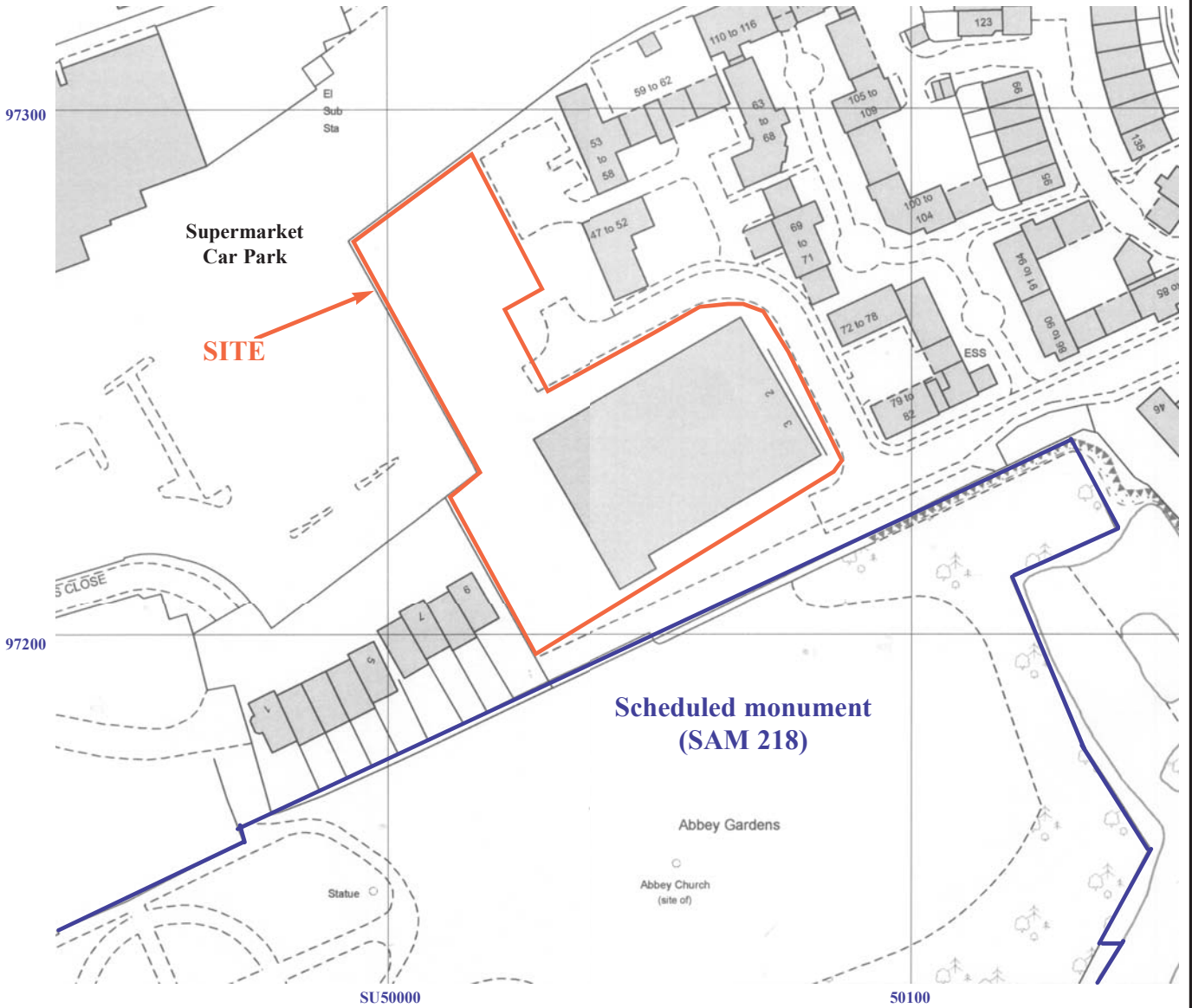
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Figure 1. Location of site within Abingdon and Oxfordshire.

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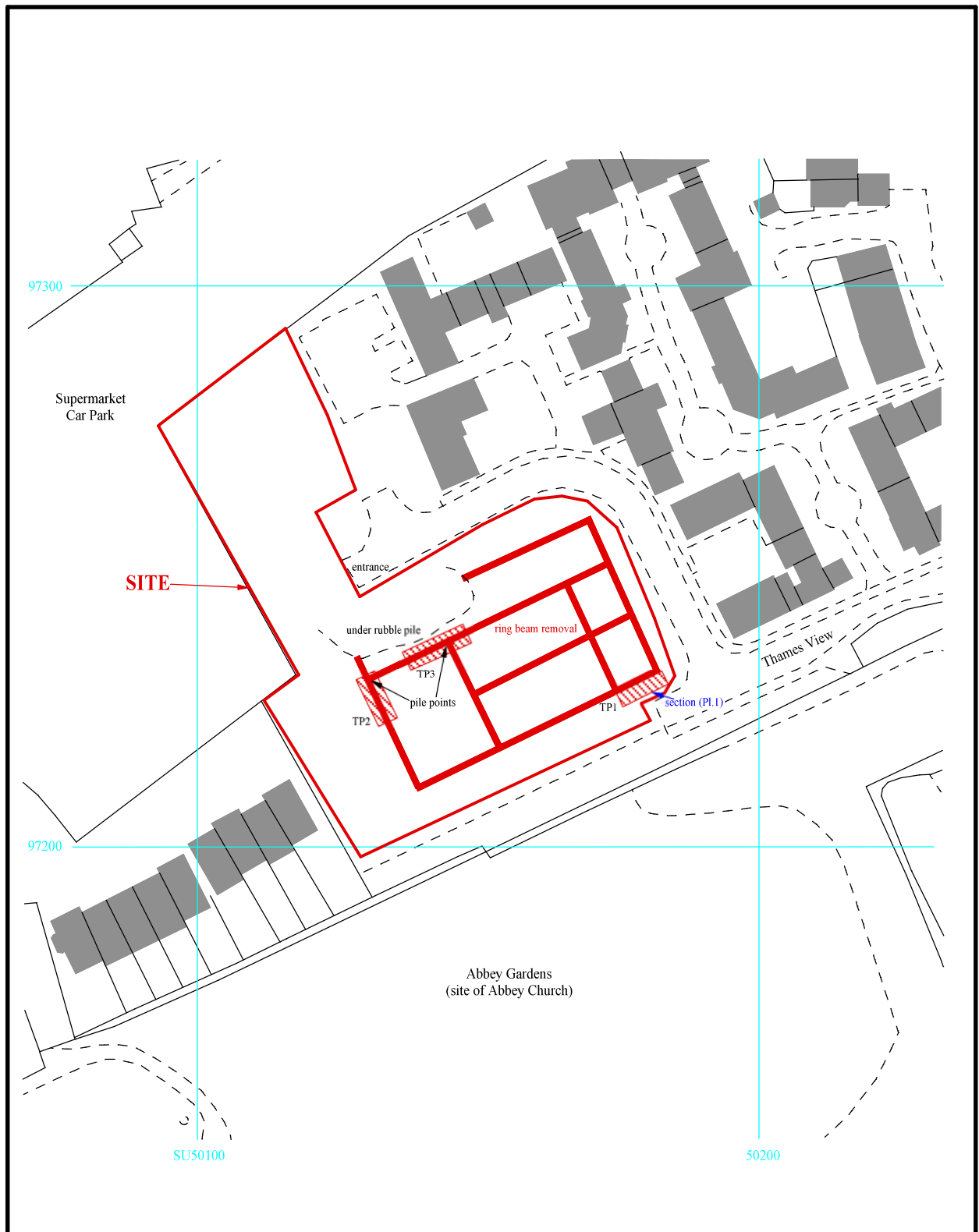
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Thames View, before industrial unit was demolished.

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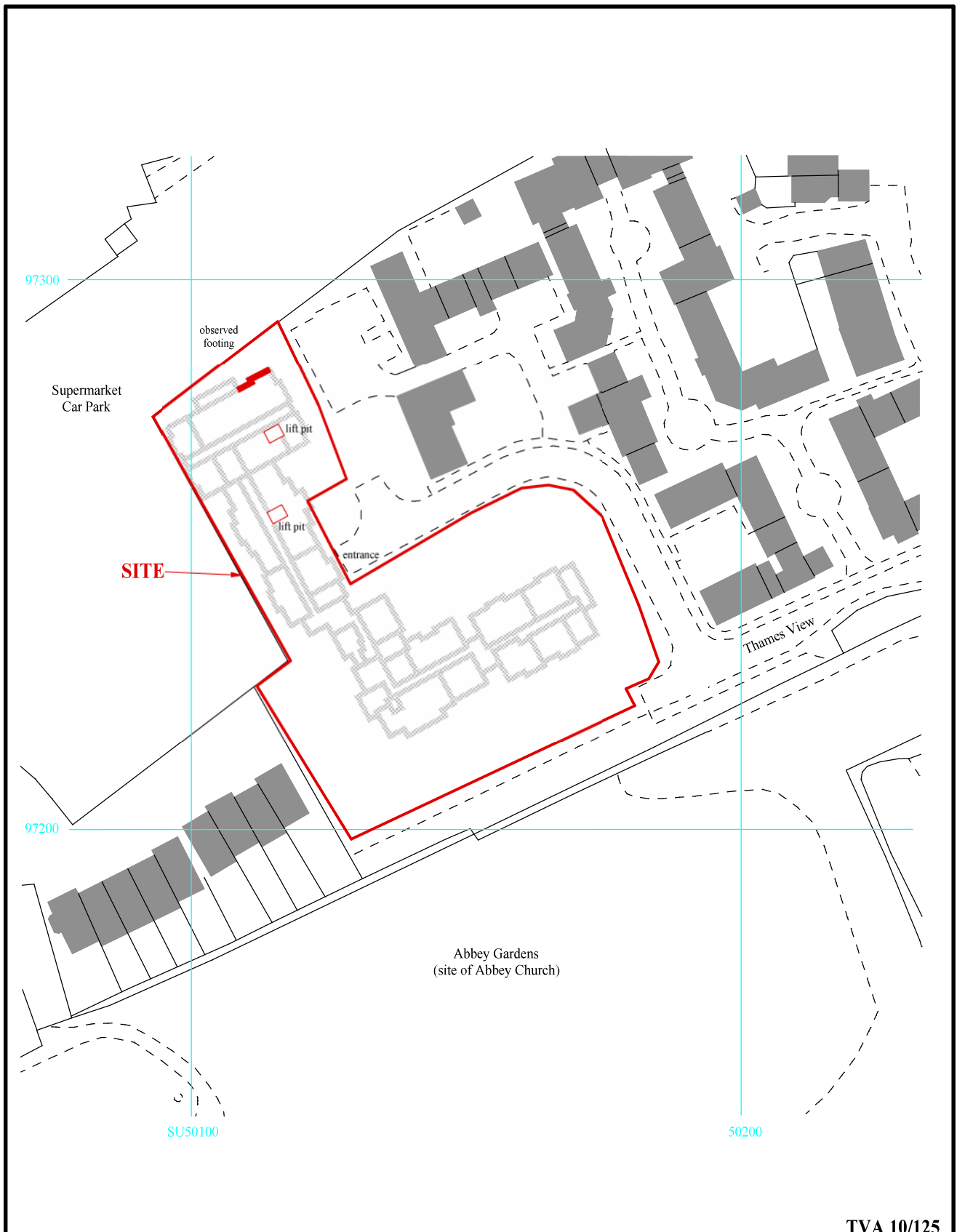


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Figure 3. Location of areas observed during demolition.



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Figure 4. Location of areas observed during groundworks.



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Representative section from lift pit 1

NW

SW

54.47m AOD

demolition rubble

modern made ground

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Figure 5. Representative Section



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Plate 1. Test pit in SE corner of site [1], looking south east. Scale: 2m



Plate 2. Lift pit 2, looking north. Scales: 2m and 1m.

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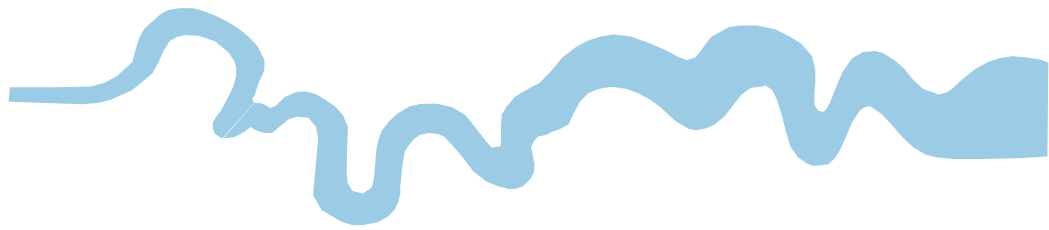
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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
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





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