

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**1 Germain Street, Chesham,
Buckinghamshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

**by David Platt
and Andy Taylor**

Site Code: GSC12/55

(SP 9589 0143)

1 Germain Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Germain House Ltd

by David Platt

and Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code GSC 12/55

March 2013

Summary

Site name: 1 Germain Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SP 9589 0143

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 10th January-27th February 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Munding and David Platt

Site code: GSC 12/55

Area of site: c.0.1ha

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 15.03.13
	Steve Preston ✓ 05.03.13

1 Germain Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by David Platt and Andy Taylor

Report 12/55

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 1 Germain Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire, HP5 1LH (SP 9590 0175) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Nick McEntyre of Germain House Ltd, 67 Valley Road, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 4DT.

Planning permission (CH/2011/0847/FA) has been gained from Chiltern District Council to redevelop the land immediately adjacent to 1 Germain Street, incorporating the existing building on the east side of the plot, which is a Grade II listed building. This new build calls for the contained development to include residential and offices made available, reaching 2/3 storeys and comprising at least 14 new flats with associated bin and cycle storage. The permission is subject to a condition (8) which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in the form of a watching brief.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and approved by Ms Eliza Alqassar, Archaeological Planning Officer with Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology. The site investigation was carried out by Andrew Muddin and David Platt between the 10th January and 27th February 2013 and the site code is GSC 12/55.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site forms an elongated plot running along the southern side of a roundabout on the main road through the southern and historic core of Chesham (A416) with the River Chess flowing to the south (Figs 1 and 2). The underlying geology is mapped as alluvium infilling the valley of the Chess, surrounded with the valley side of Middle Chalk (BGS 1946). The site lies at a height of c.100m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted by a briefing note provided by Ms Eliza Alqassar of Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service drawing on a desk-based assessment (CgMs 2011). In summary this stems from the site's location within the historic core of Chesham. Prior to modern redevelopment this area was previously characterized as historic narrow plots that originally formed the north end of Bridge Street leading into the Market Square. It appears the property follows the burgage plot form with 1 Germain Street (Grade II listed) fronting the highway and yards and outbuildings to the rear (CgMs 2011). There is also the potential for prehistoric evidence (Stainton 2005). A number of prehistoric sites have been recorded within the historic core of the town such as at Chessvale Bowling Club and at Stratford's Yard on East Street. Salvage excavation uncovered Mesolithic flint artefacts indicating a flint working area with evidence of later re-use in the Neolithic period. An excavation at Chessvale in 2003 also recorded Neolithic and Middle Bronze Age flint and pottery and a Bronze Age ring ditch (levelled burial mound).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks.

Specific research aims were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to determine whether archaeological deposits relating to Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval settlement are present.

Results

The piling mat

The initial groundworks comprised the stripping of overburden for most of the site area prior to laying a piling mat (Fig. 3). The piling mat area was dug to a depth of 0.52m through a homogenous overburden containing dark brown clayey silt with modern brick fragments. This overburden was not fully removed and no archaeological deposits were encountered. The top of the piling mat was approximately 0.1m lower than the original pre-development ground surface.

Groundbeam trenches

The groundbeam trenches (Fig. 3) mostly measured 1.00m wide and were dug to a depth of 0.85m through the piling mat. The stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.40m of demolition rubble (piling mat) overlying 0.20m of made ground (dark brown clayey silt with modern brick fragments). This overlay 0.25m of a dark grey brown sandy silt, which may represent a buried soil horizon. This overlay sand and gravel natural geology. No archaeological deposits were observed in these trenches.

Finds

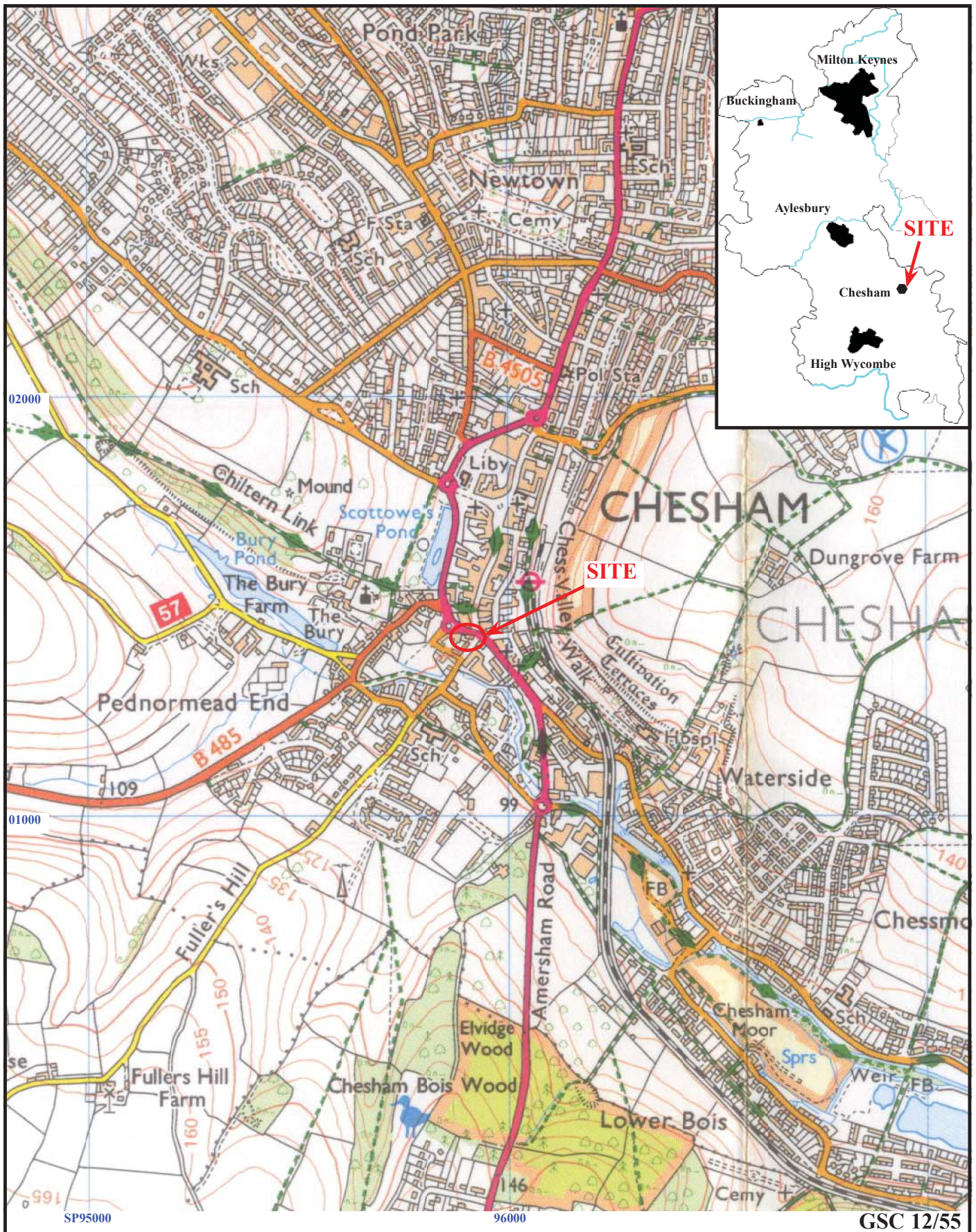
No finds of an archaeological nature were recovered during the watching brief.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeological deposits being present, no features or finds were observed during the watching brief.

References

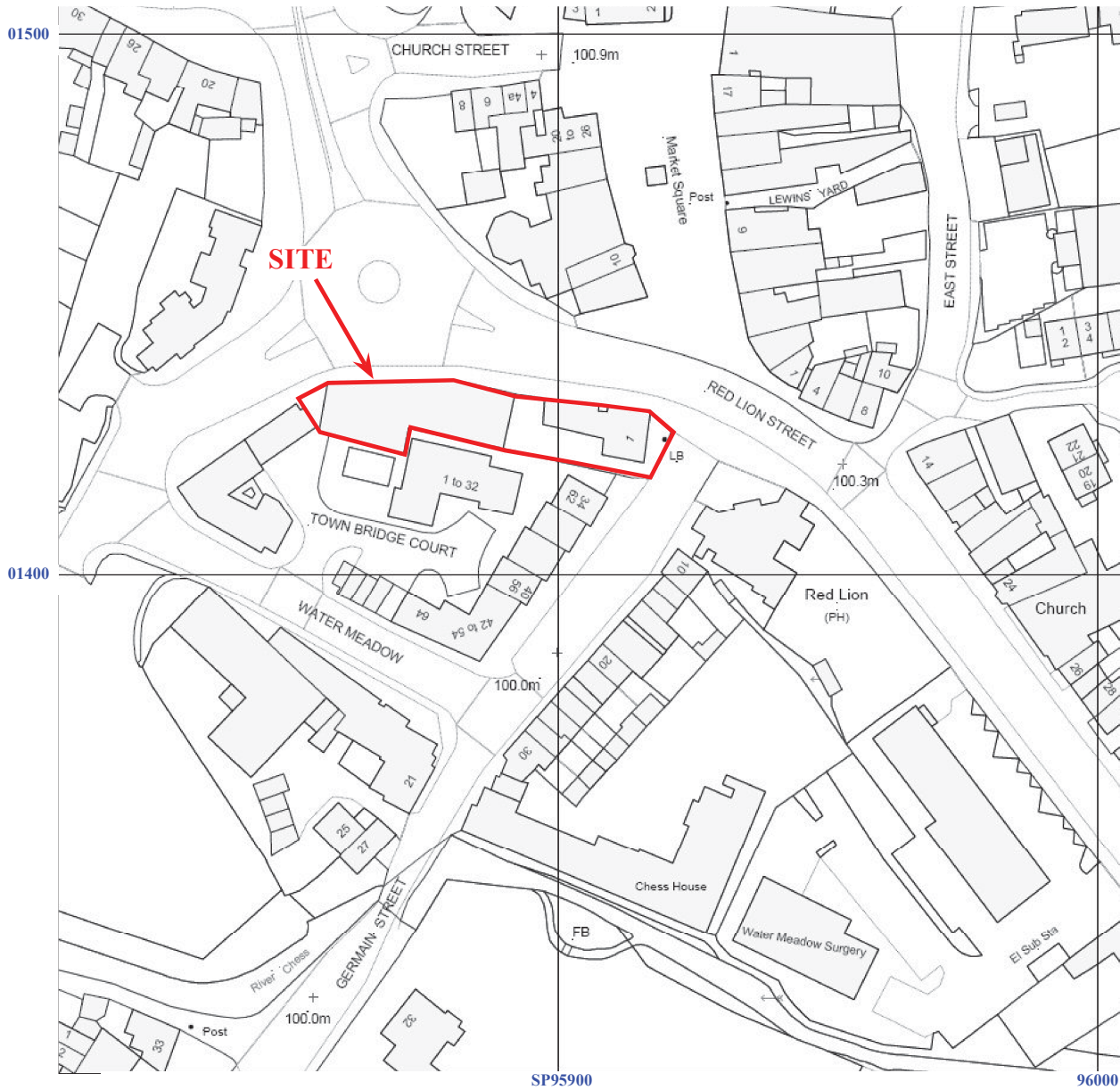
- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 238, Drift Edition, Keyworth
CgMs, 2011, '1 Germain Street, Chesham, Buckinghamshire, Heritage Statement', CgMs Consulting, London
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
Stainton, B, 1995, 'Fieldwork by the Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society (CVAHS) in the Buckinghamshire Chilterns' in R Holgate (ed), *Chiltern Archaeology, Recent Work*, Dunstable, 124–30



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Figure 1. Location of site within Chesham and Buckinghamshire.

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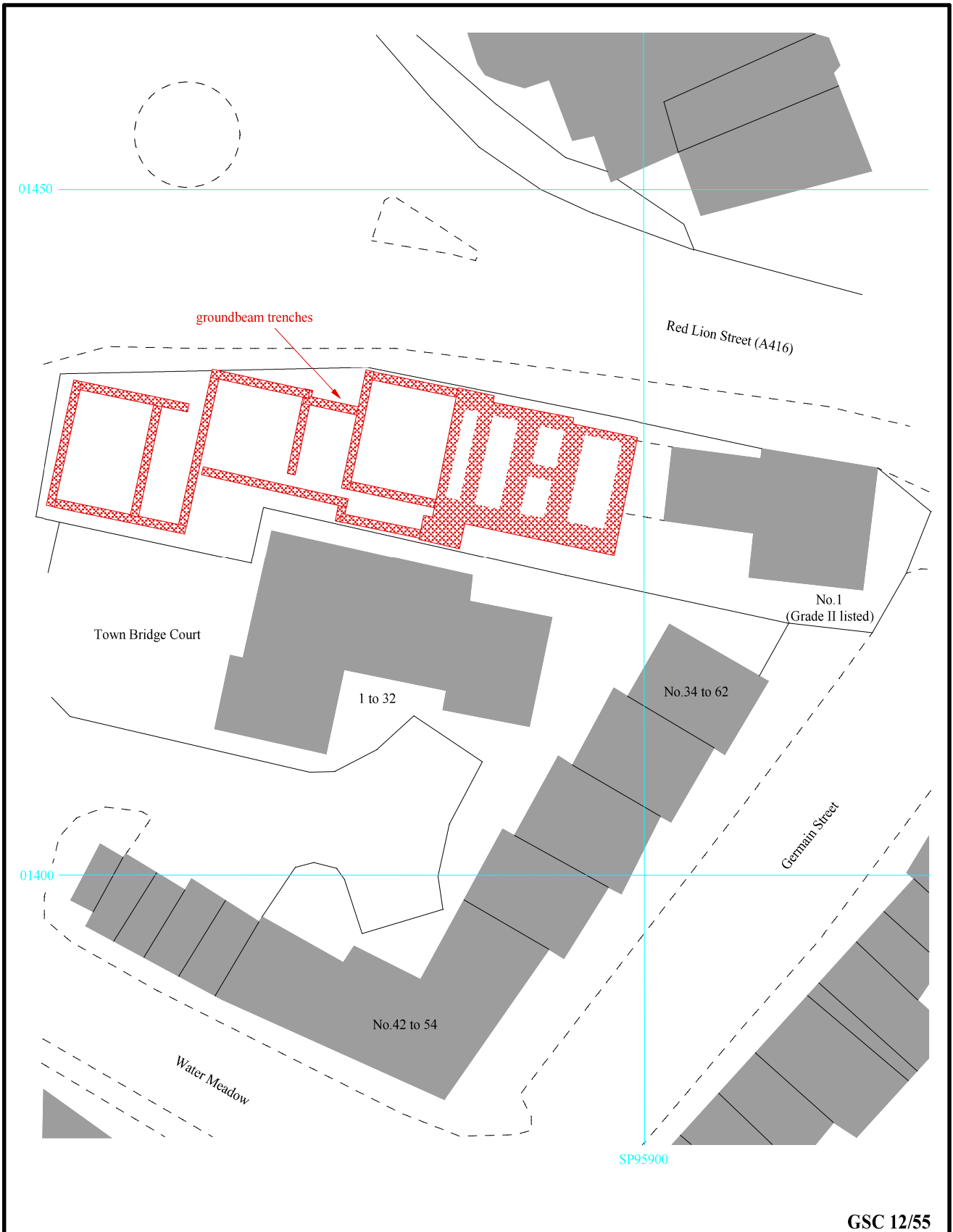


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Germain Street.

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Figure 3. Location of observed area.



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Groundbeam trench

W

E

[100.1maOD](#)

Piling mat (demolition rubble)

Dark brown clayey silt with modern brick fragments (made ground)

Dark grey brown sandy silt (subsoil or buried topsoil?)

----- base of trench
Sand and gravel (natural geology)

W 0.1maOD

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Figure 4. Representative Section.



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Plate 1. Laying of piling mat, looking east.



Plate 2. Representative section, looking south, Scale: 1m.

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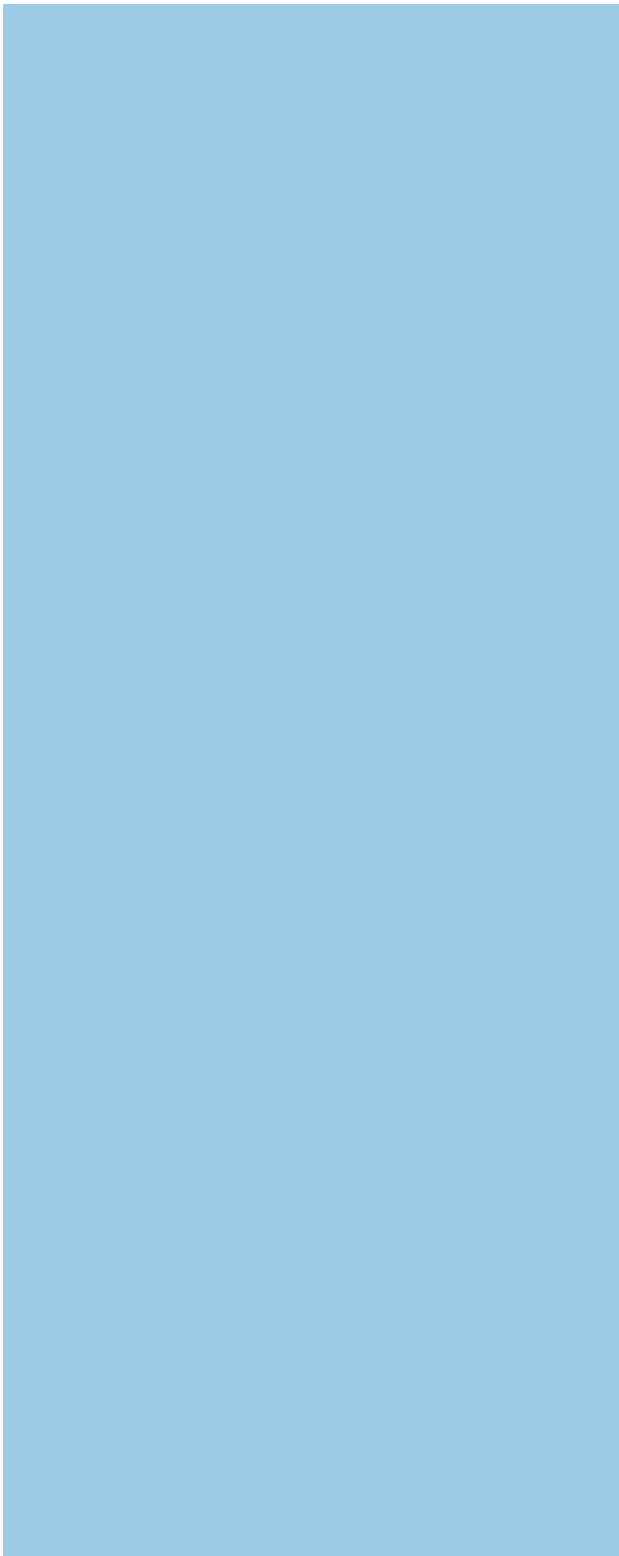
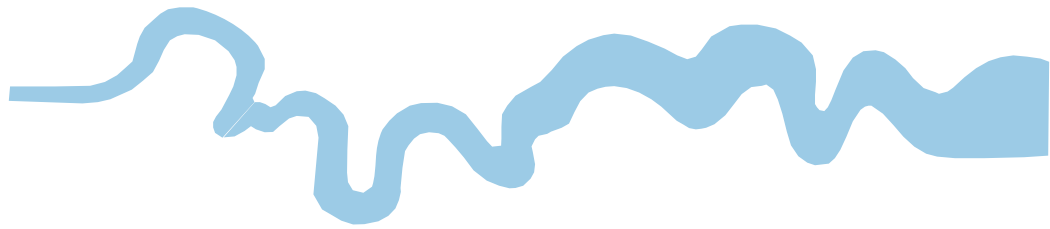
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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