

**The Old Pound Cottage, 46 Wellington Street,
Thame, Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Adrian Dite

by Andrew Munding

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WST 13/47

May 2013

Summary

Site name: The Old Pound Cottage, 46 Wellington Street, Thame, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 7092 0580

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 30th April– 2nd May 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Mundin

Site code: WST 13/47

Area of site: 48 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits of archaeological interest were uncovered during digging of the new extension footings. A few sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from made ground deposits

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 09.05.13 Steve Preston ✓ 09.05.13

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by Andrew Muddin

Report 13/47

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 46 Wellington Street, Thame, Oxfordshire (SP 7092 0580) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Matias Smyly of Porter Consulting & Management Services, on behalf of the homeowner, Mr Adrian Dite.

Planning permission (P12/S2789/HH) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council for a new extension to the building which includes a conservatory to replace the 20th century extension, attached to the 17th-century cottage. The cottage is Grade II Listed (PRN 21647; Pl. 1). Due to the possibility of deposits of archaeological importance being present in the site, two conditions have been attached to the permission (4 and 5) that require a watching brief to be implemented during the groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation followed a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, and based on a brief supplied by him (Oram 2013). The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin from 30th April to 2nd May 2013. The site code is WST 13/47.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the southern side of Wellington Street (Fig. 2), which is on the eastern edge of the town's historic core. Wellington Street lies to the north of the Upper High Street, Corn Market, and the Market Place. The house has a raised level ornamental garden to the rear. A portion of the location of the new footings contained the previous foundation for the old extension which had been removed prior to observations. The underlying geology is mapped as being Lower Greensand, with probable glacial clays and silts above (BGS 1994). The height of the site at the northern end at the entrance drive is 72m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Archaeological background

The potential of the site has been highlighted by the brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2013). The site contains a Grade II Listed Building, which is noted to be a 'thatched, two-storey, half hipped roofed building with a brick ridged stacked chimney'. The front porch and previous rear extensions are of 20th century construction. The location of the building itself lies within the historic core of the town centre, with the Medieval market place to the south. Though initially with Saxon origins centred more to the west, close to St, Mary's Church, 'New' Thame was a planned settlement from the 1140s, for the Bishop of Lincoln to service newly founded religious establishments nearby (Airs *et al* 1975). This planned development was made up of long thin burgage plots set out from the High Street with the site lying within one of these. The First Edition Ordnance Survey (Fig. 3) shows that Wellington Street in 1881 was known as Pound Street, in reference to the Town Pound, sometimes known as a pinhold, which was on this road (where the constable lived who collected fines from illegal grazing of livestock). Interestingly, at this date, the current house is not labelled; instead the Pound itself was further to the east.

Other earlier finds have been recorded close to the site, which include findspots of prehistoric and Roman material. Recently, an excavation at the football ground to the north of the town identified Late Neolithic pits, an Early Bronze monumental ring ditch, and a Iron Age pit alignment (Taylor 2012).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record archaeological deposits affected by the new groundworks. This would involve observations of areas of intrusive groundworks, which would predominantly include reduced strip areas, footing trenches and service runs. All works were to be carried out with a toothed bucket fitted to a mechanical excavator, due to the depth of the excavation and the rubble in the site overburden.

Results

All footings, which included the new extension and conservatory footing trenches, were dug to the same depth of 1.3m (Fig. 4; Pls 2–3). The boundary wall for the property at the eastern side was removed to allow for the new footing to be dug. A shallow level of overburden was also been reduced to 'patio depth'; some 0.24m below original ground level (Fig. 5). The new extension trenches extended over an area 6.1m long x 5.5m wide and the conservatory footing 4.9m wide x 2.8m long.

The stratigraphy revealed in the footings for the conservatory comprised brown sandy silty with broken modern ceramic building material and concrete above was a layer of made ground (50) which was a dark brown sandy clay, containing ceramic building material (tile) and occasional mass-produced white earthenware pottery ('china'). This layer generally reached a depth of 0.6m but in places 0.75m. No features were seen to cut this layer, nor to be sealed by it. Extending beneath this was a layer of orange brown sandy silt, which was a natural subsoil deposit. The base of excavation was at no greater depth than 1.3m. At a depth of 1.1m was the natural Greensand deposit.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 2 sherds with a total weight of 53g. They both occurred in the topsoil, context (50). They were recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 1 sherd, 20g.

OXEST: London stoneware, c. 1680+. 1 sherd, 33g.

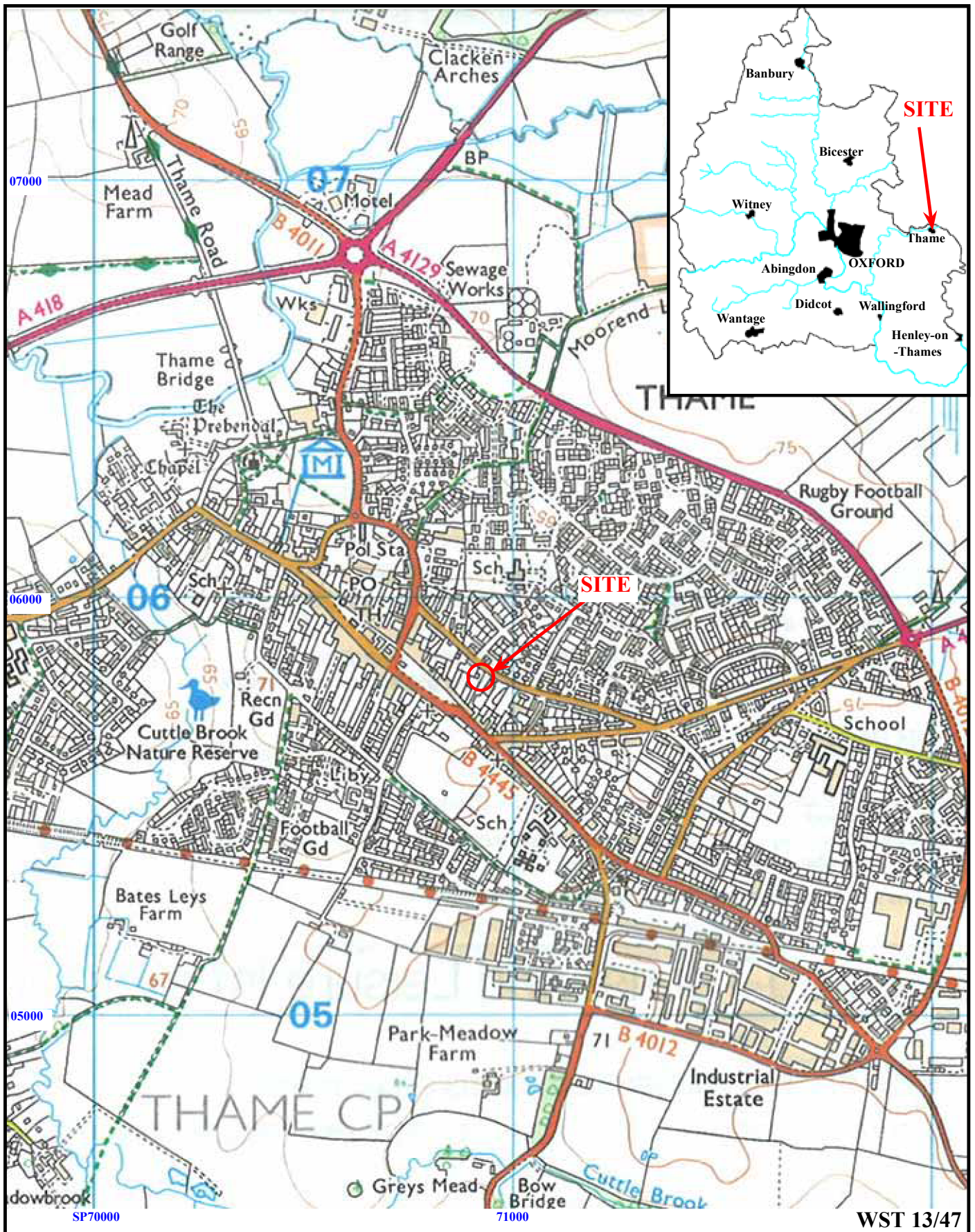
Both types are common finds at sites in the region.

Conclusion

No deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during the watching brief. A few sherds of post-medieval date were recorded from made ground deposits.

References

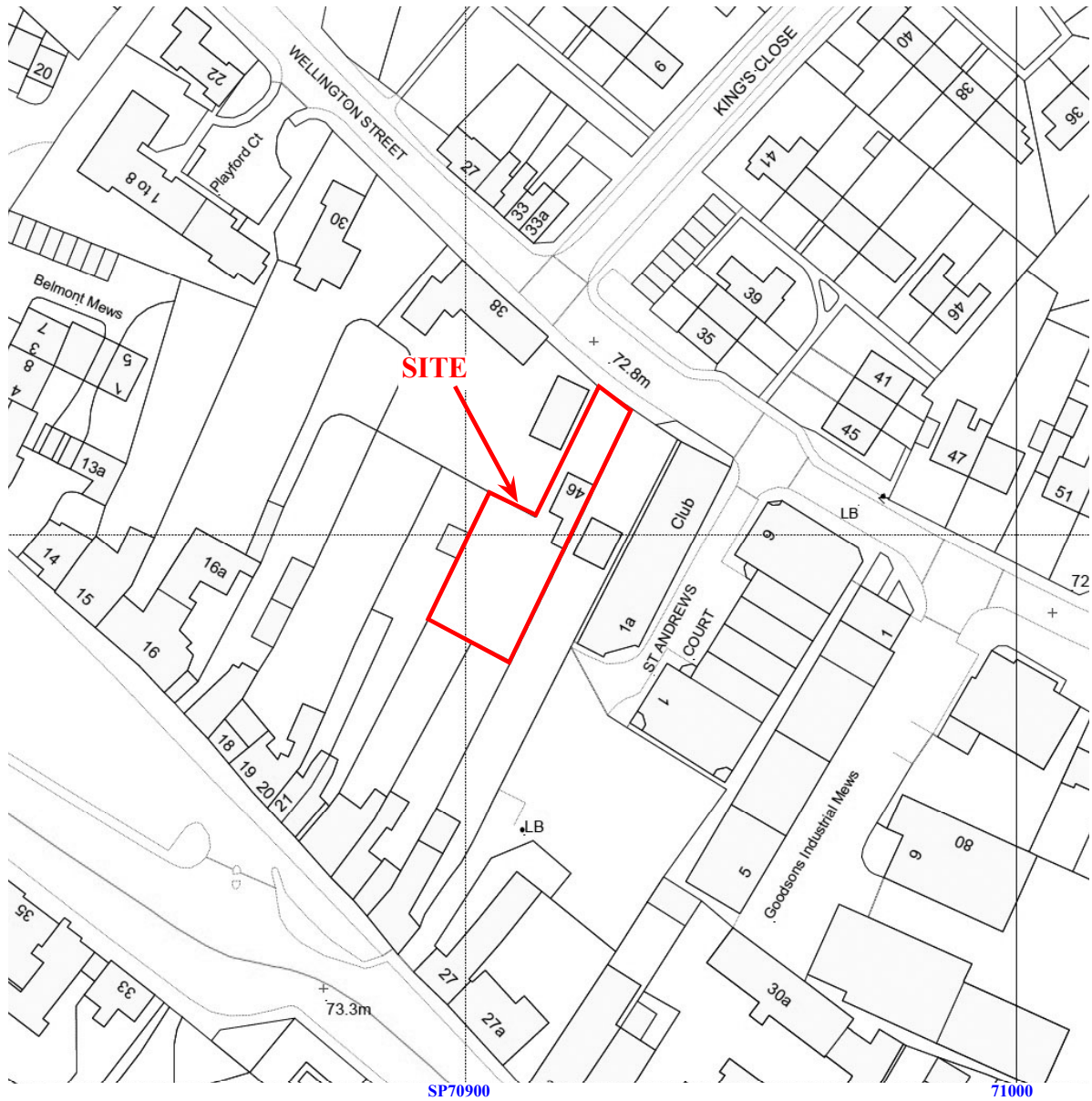
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 Figure 1. Location of site within Thame and Oxfordshire.

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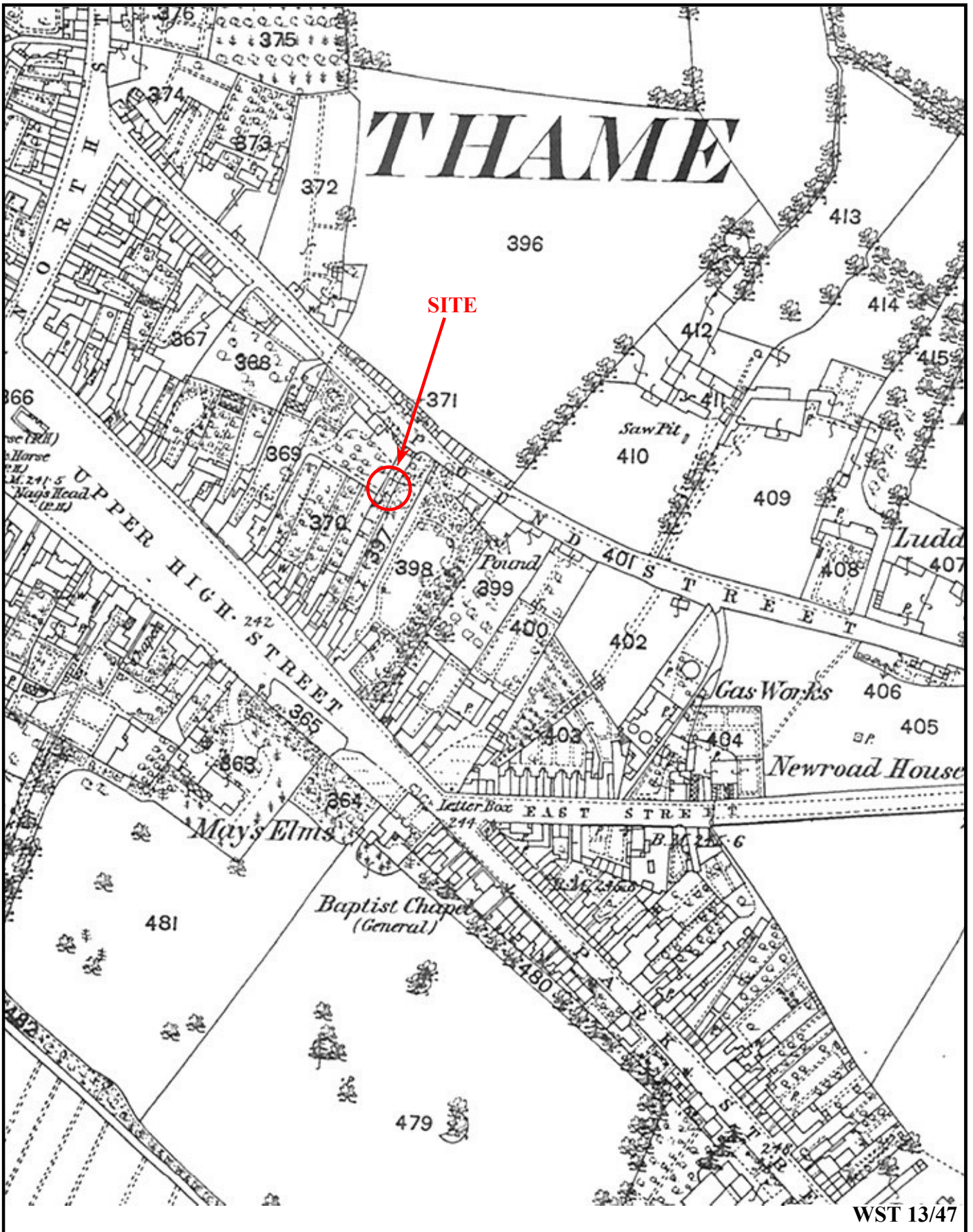
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Wellington Street.

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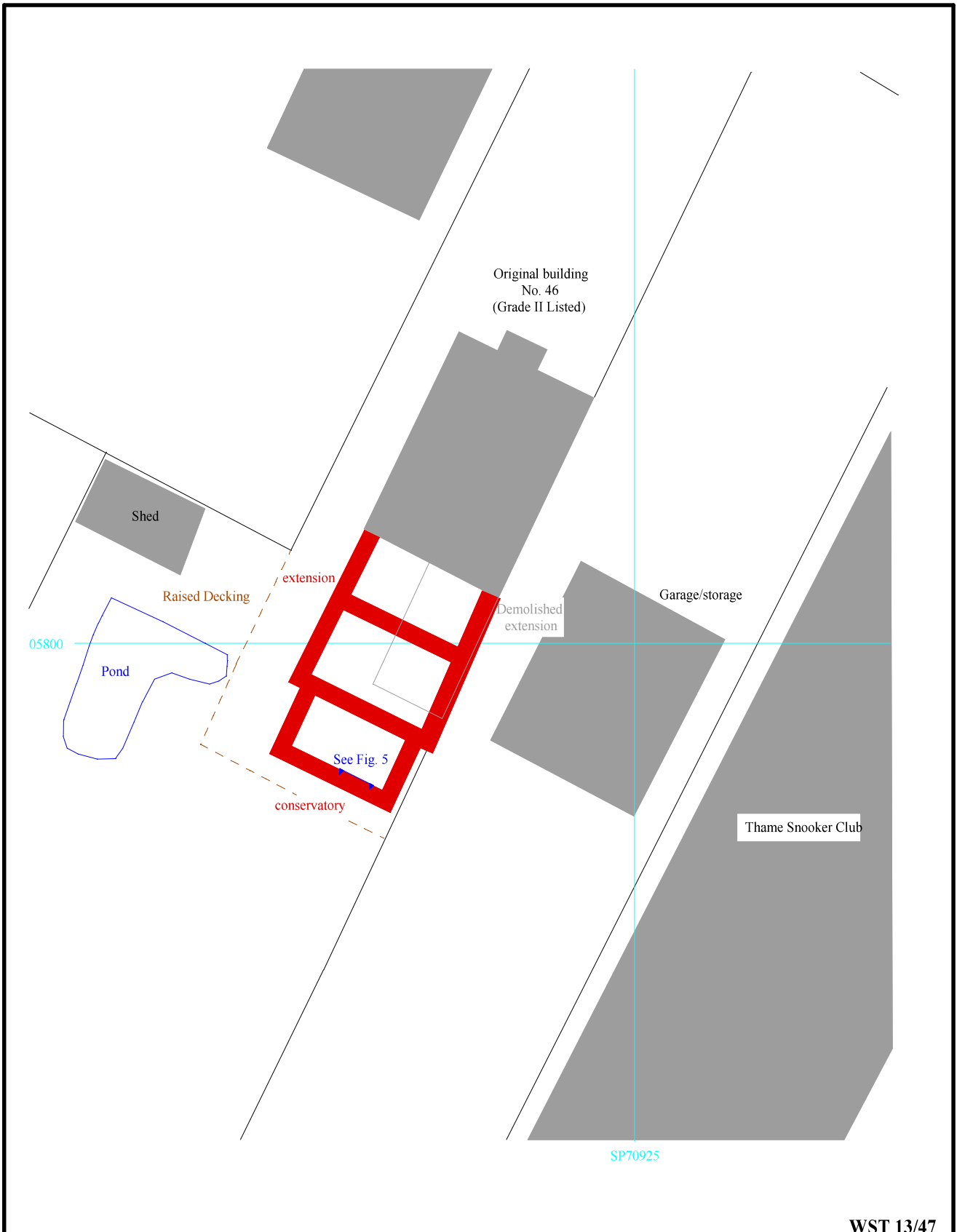


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Figure 3. First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1881.

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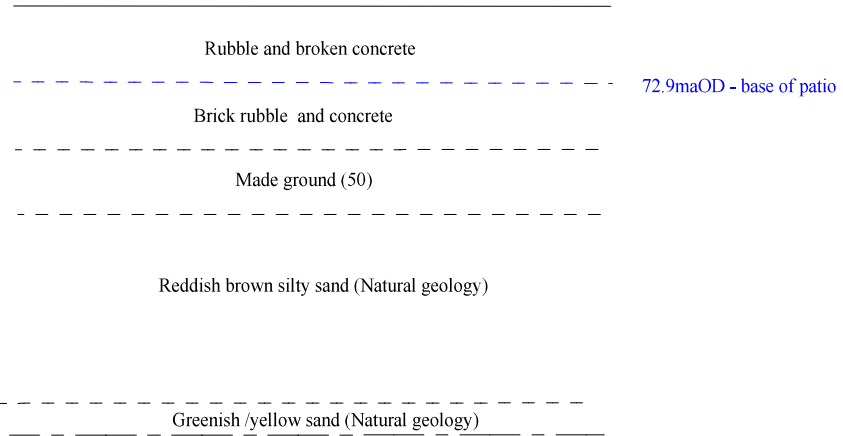
Figure 4. Location of observed area.



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Figure 5. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Front elevation of the Listed Building, looking south.



Plate 2. Rear extension and conservatory footings, looking north.



Plate 3. Representative section, looking south.

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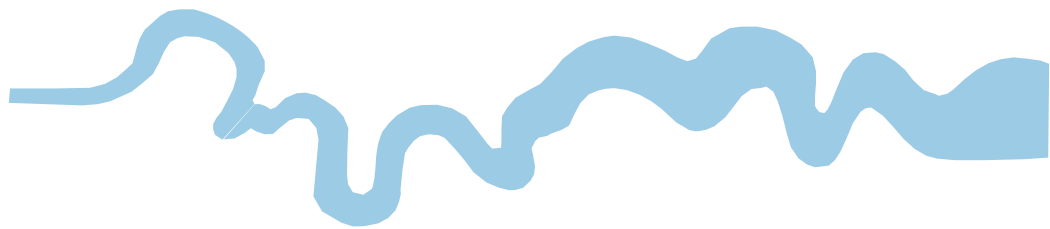
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Plates 1-3.

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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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