

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Wallingford Rowing Club, Thames Street,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Recording Action**

**by Daniel Bray**

**Site Code: WRC13/111**

**(SU 6085 8921)**

**Wallingford Rowing Club, Thames Street,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Recording Action**

**For Pinelog Ltd**

by Daniel Bray

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WRC  
13/111

**November 2013**

## Summary

**Site name:** Wallingford Rowing Club, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 6085 8921

**Site activity:** Recording Action

**Date and duration of project:** 13th – 18th August 2013

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisors:** Aidan Colyer, Tim Dawson and Andy Taylor

**Site code:** WRC 13/111

**Area of site:** 100m sq

**Summary of results:** Much of the work did not penetrate to the archaeologically relevant level. Only at the extreme west of the site was natural gravel observed, and here three small features were recorded, probably dating to the late Saxon or very early Norman period.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 08.11.13 Steve Preston ✓ 05.11.13
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# Wallingford Rowing Club, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by Daniel Bray

Report 13/111

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Wallingford Rowing Club, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (SU 6085 8921) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Greenhough of Pinelog Ltd, Riverside Business Park, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1GS.

Planning permission (P12/S2963/FUL) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council to construct a new gymnasium on the footprint of a current building at Wallingford Rowing Club. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeology a condition has been attached to the planning permission requiring an archaeological recording action 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's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, advisors to the district on archaeological matters and designed in accordance with a brief supplied by him. The field work was undertaken by Aidan Colyer, Tim Dawson Andy Taylor and Dan Strachan between 13th and 18th August 2013 with the site code WRC 13/111.

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

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern side of Wallingford, 75m to the west of the River Thames and on the western side of Thames Street (Fig. 2). The site is currently occupied by a single-storey gymnasium and bordered by a car park and grassland. The underlying geology is mapped as first terrace (1a) flood plain gravel (BGS 1980). The site lies at a height of 49m above Ordnance Datum.

## Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2013). In summary, the site lies within the core of the medieval town and within the defended area of the Saxon *burh* (Preston 2010; Airs *et al.* 1975). The site is located 20m west of the

predicted eastern side of the Saxon defences. Saxon buildings were recorded 60m to the west of the site and 50m south is the site of the church of St Michael, documented in 1217 but ruinous by 1374. A test pit dug by Wallingford Historic and Archaeological Society suggested the presence of c. 1.8m of build-up above the natural geology, with finds of medieval and modern date recorded (Bedford 2012). A watching brief undertaken directly opposite the site identified two Saxon features (McNicoll-Norbury 2010).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This would involve the examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks and would include observations of surface stripping, geo-technical investigations, the excavations of foundations and service trenches, landscaping works and all other intrusive works. For this site a single phase of ground reduction within the footprint of the building was undertaken.

## **Results**

The area of the new building was reduced to a depth of 1.16m using a 360°-type excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of Tarmac/made ground above 0.81m of dark grey brown silty clay with gravel inclusions (52) above a green grey clay silt deposit with frequent gravel inclusions, thought to be the natural geology. At this depth two pits and a pit or posthole (1, 2 and 3) were revealed at the western end of the site. The features are summarized in Appendix 1.

Pit 1 appeared rectangular in plan and was excavated to a depth of 0.27m. The mid grey brown clay silt deposit (53) contained two sherds of 11th-century pottery. Pit 2 also appeared rectangular in plan and cut pit/posthole 3. Pit 2 contained also two fragments of mid to late 11th century pottery. None of the features were fully excavated as the excavated depth was the maximum level of the proposed ground works and thus preserving the rest of the features *in situ*.

No archaeological features were revealed east of the excavated pits and posthole. The area had been truncated heavily by a modern drain chamber and soakaway and it is possible that the natural geology sloped from west to east and was therefore not revealed at this end of the site.

## Finds

### *Pottery* by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 19g. It was recorded using the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor and Oakley 1984; Mellor 1994), as follows:

**AXB:** Late Saxon Oxford Shelly Ware, late 8<sup>th</sup>– early 11<sup>th</sup> C. 1 sherd, 5g.

**WA38:** Wallingford ware, AD1050 – 1250. 2 sherds, 9g.

**OXY:** Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075 – 1350. 1 sherd, 5g

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region. All the pottery appears to be of 11th century date, although the sherd of AXB, a fragment of a jar-rim, could be conceivably earlier. The sherds are, however, all quite small, and undoubtedly the product of secondary deposition.

## Conclusion

Natural geology was only revealed with certainty at the western end of the site where three features containing pottery of mid to late 11th century date were revealed. Although the dating evidence was scant, there is no obvious reason to discount it. Pit/posthole 3 was the earliest stratigraphically as it was truncated by pit 2 but no pottery was recovered from it. None of these features were fully excavated but rather preserved *in situ* as the works would not be truncating deeper than the level revealed. The site is located 20m west of the probable eastern edge of the Saxon defences but no trace of features which maybe related to the *burh* ditch were identified. The features do show there was Saxo-Norman activity on the site.

## References

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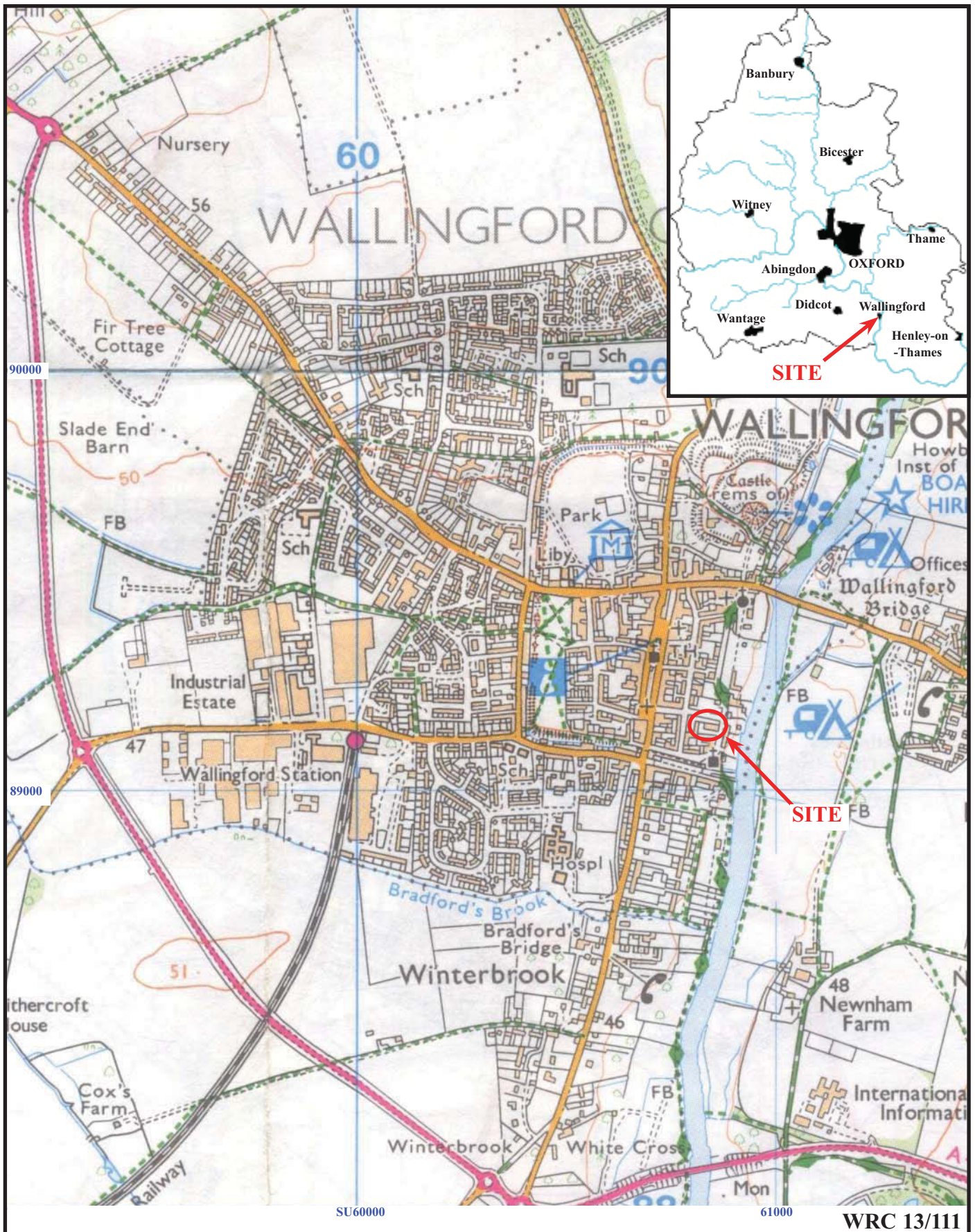
**APPENDIX 1:** Catalogue of excavated features

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	53	Pit	Saxo-Norman	Pottery
2	54	Pit	Saxo-Norman	Pottery
3	55	Pit/posthole	Saxo-Norman or earlier	Stratigraphy

**APPENDIX 2:** Pottery by number of sherds and weight (in g).

Cut	Deposit	OXB		WA38		OXY	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
1	53			2	9		
2	54	1	5			1	5
	Total	1	5	2	9	1	5

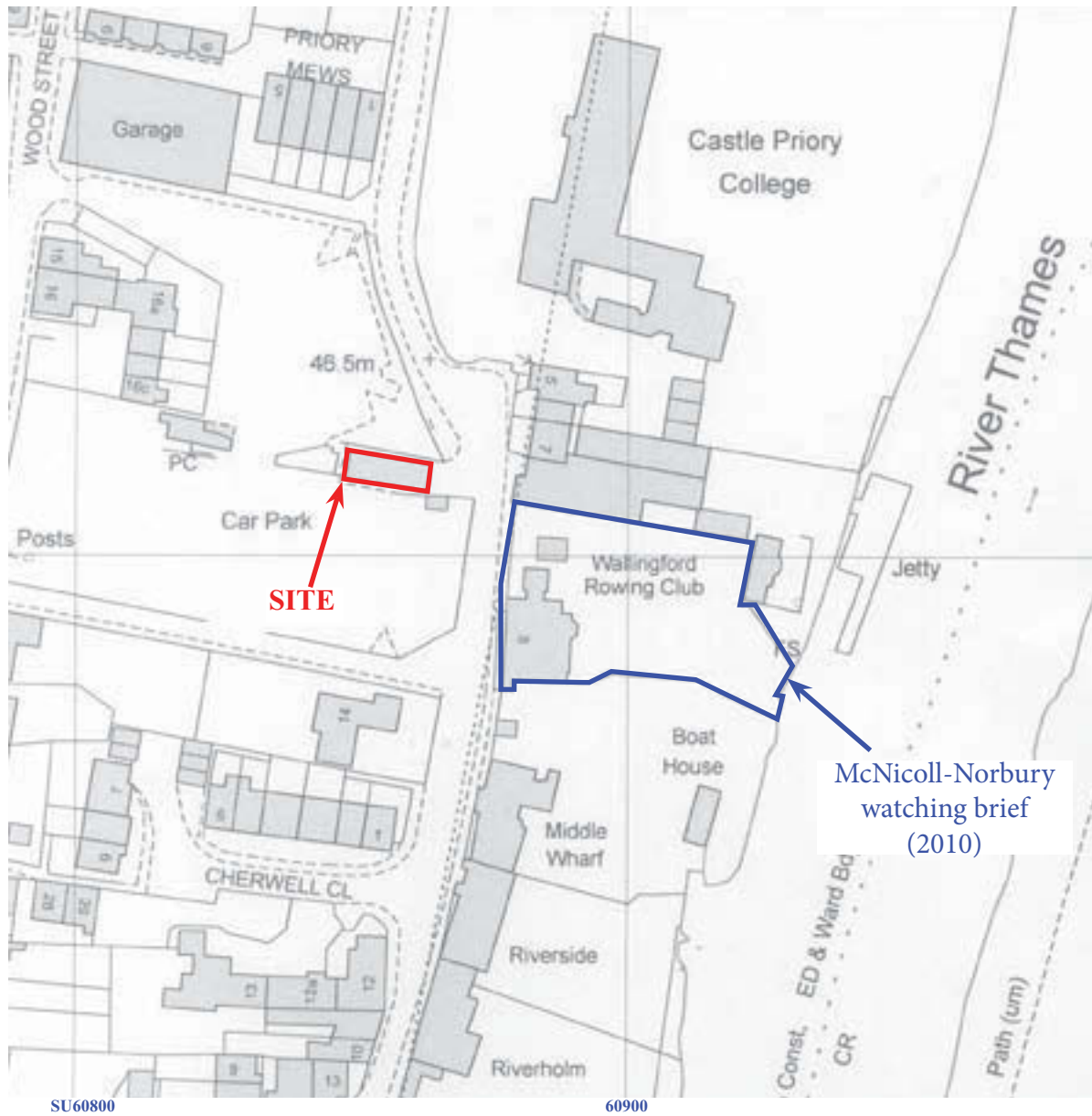




**Wallingford Rowing Club, Thames Street, Wallingford,  
Oxfordshire, 2012**  
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 Figure 1. Location of site within Wallingford and Oxfordshire.

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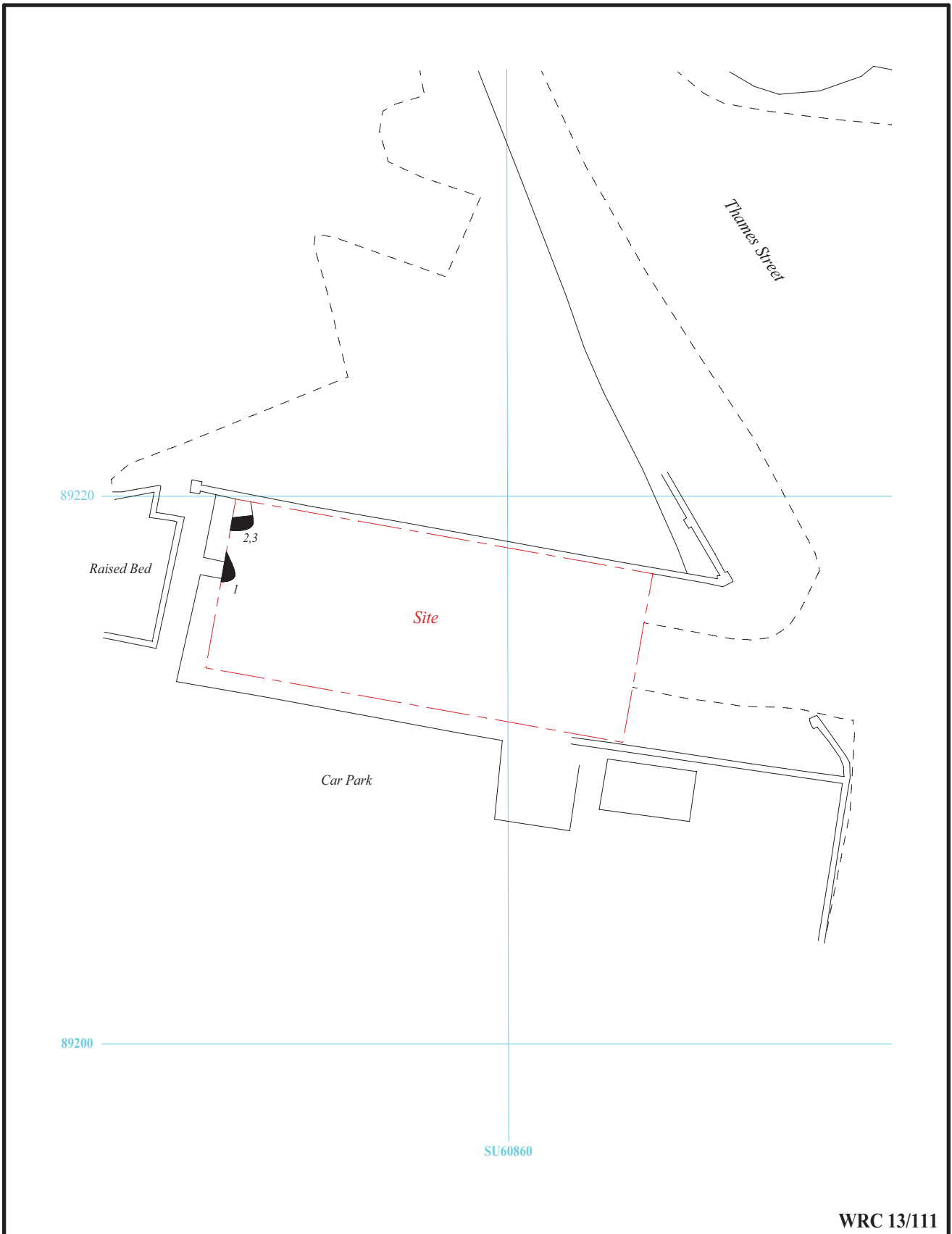
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**Wallingford Rowing Club, Thames Street,  
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Thames Street.

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Figure 3. Detail of observed area



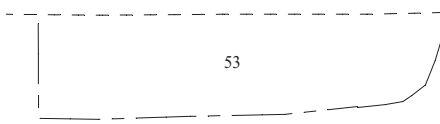
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S ————— N

Tarmac/made ground

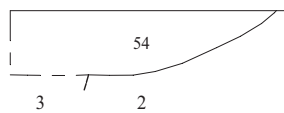


Mid grey brown silty clay  
52



48.50maOD

SSW



NNE 48.50maOD

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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Pit 1, looking east, Scales: 0.30m and 0.50m.



Plate 2. Pit 2 and Pit/Posthole? 3, looking north, Scales: 0.10m and 0.50m.

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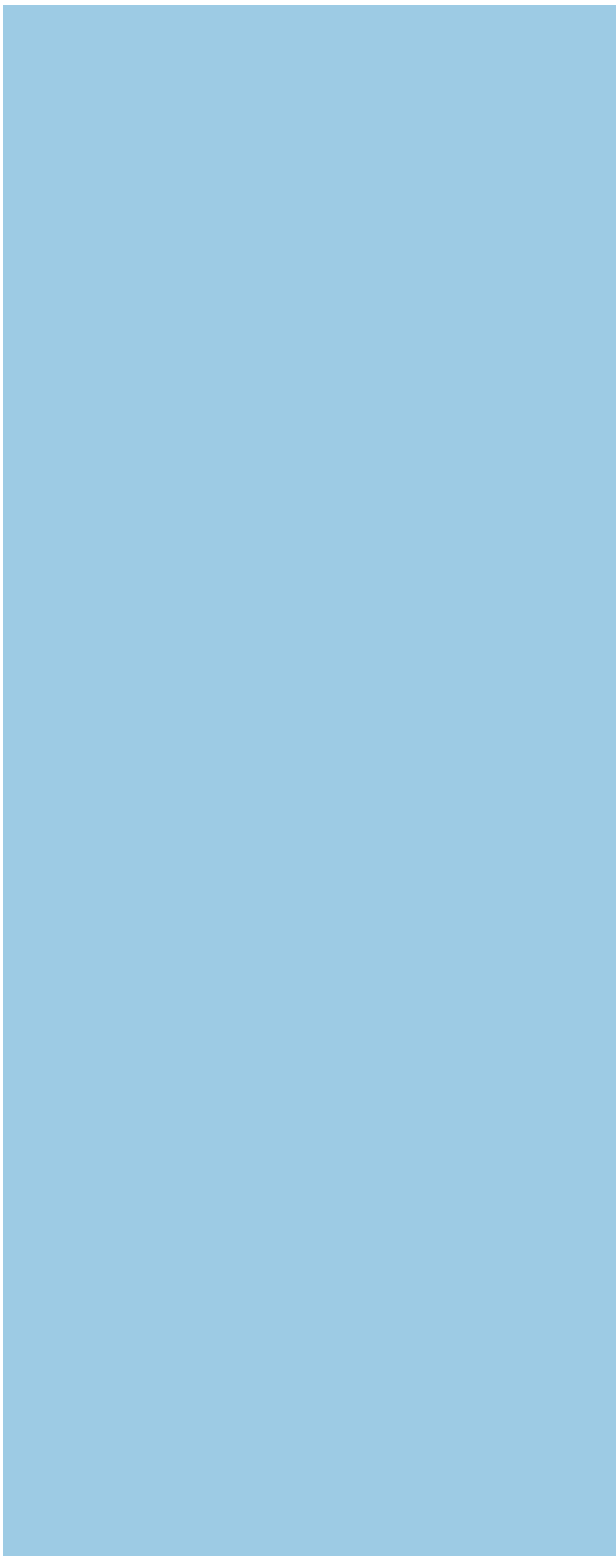
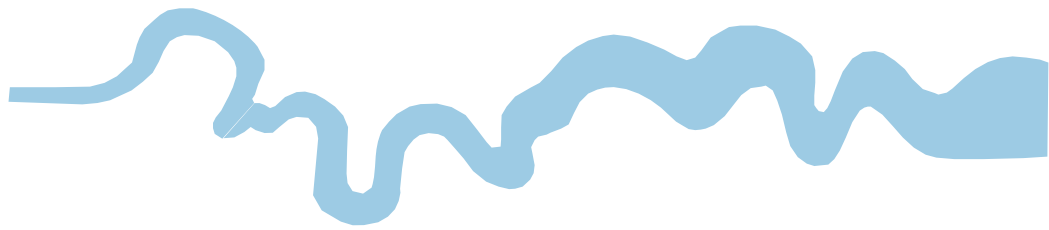
Wallingford Rowing Club, Thames Street,  
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Plates 1 - 2.

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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





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