

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**18-20 Oxford Street,
Lambourn, West Berkshire**

An archaeological recording action

By David Platt and Susan Porter

**OSL12/70
(SU 3280 7902)**

**18-20 Oxford Street, Lambourn,
West Berkshire**

An Archaeological Recording Action

for Mr and Mrs C. Harris

by David Platt and Sue Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code OSL12/70

May 2014

Summary

Site name: 18-20 Oxford Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 3280 7902

Site activity: Archaeological Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 10th February – 29th April 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: OSL12/70

Area of site: c0.01ha

Summary of results: A gully terminus of medieval date was found along with three postholes and a pit which were undated but most likely also of medieval date.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum 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 All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: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 ✓ 21.05.14 Steve Preston ✓ 20.05.14

18-20 Oxford Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by David Platt and Sue Porter

Report 12/70

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at 18-20 Oxford Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire (SU 3280 7902) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Marianna Smith of Mathewson Waters Architects, The Old Surgery, Crowle Rd, Lambourn, Berkshire RG17 8NR on behalf of Mr and Mrs C Harris, 13a Oxford St, Lambourn, Berkshire RG17 8XS.

Planning permission (12/01823/FULD) has been granted by West Berkshire Council for the replacement of existing cottages with a pair of two-bedroomed cottages. This consent contains a condition (8) relating to archaeology, requiring a programme of archaeological works to be carried out. A single component of work was proposed, a recording action by means of machine trenching covering the footprint of the new building. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Sarah Orr, Acting Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt and Steve Crabb between the 10th February and the 29th April 2014 and the site code is OSL12/70. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the centre of Lambourn, approximately 150m north-east of the parish church (Fig. 1) on the north side of Oxford Street and immediately adjacent to the River Lambourn, which forms the western boundary of the site (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is valley gravel of the River Lambourn (BGS 1947). An off white/pale grey calcareous gravel was observed in the area of the recording action. The site lies at a height of 123m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site lies on the edge of the historic core of Lambourn, which is thought to have originated as a Saxon royal estate before developing into a town during the medieval period. The site lies on the eastern edge of what is thought to be the Saxon core of the town centred on the parish church and oval street pattern. The parish church of St Michael and All Angels has a late 12th-century tower and nave and is thought to be located on the site of the original late Saxon church (Astill 1978). An evaluation and subsequent watching brief on the site of the former Red Lion Hotel, on the corner of Newbury Street and Oxford Street, revealed evidence of early–middle Saxon, medieval and post-medieval activity in the form of surfaces, pits, postholes and ditches (King 1999a and b). An evaluation at Bourne House Stables also on Oxford Street uncovered a well shaft of possible Roman date together with linear features of Saxon date (King 2000). Subsequent fieldwork there recorded Early/Middle Saxon sunken floored buildings, further Roman features and medieval and post-medieval deposits (King in prep). A watching brief to the south at 2 Newbury Street revealed two medieval pits of 11th- to 12th-century date and one later pit of 15th-century date (Wallis 2003). Further to the south at 18–20 High Street another watching brief recorded a number of pits ranging in date from medieval through the 16th century to the 19th century (Hindmarch and Ford 2003). A recording action carried out on the adjacent plot of land directly north of the current site (Ford 2004) identified two pits of medieval and post-medieval date (Figs 2 and 3).

Objectives and methodology

The general objectives of the project were to: excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development; produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site; establish the character of these deposits in an attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic, etc; and to produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

The specific research objectives 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 if any deposits representing late Saxon, medieval or post-medieval deposits are present, and if so their date and nature.

The area was to be stripped of overburden by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to expose the archaeologically sensitive levels under archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features

were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief. A programme of environmental sampling was to take place where sufficient well-stratified subsoil deposits were located.

Results (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

The area of the site was stripped of overburden as intended but water ingress during the very wet weather of winter 2014 curtailed immediate investigation of the deposits encountered. This eventually took place in spring 2014. A modest number of features were recorded.

Gully terminus 4

A single gully terminus was observed aligned roughly east–west. It was 0.30m wide and 0.05m deep and contained a single fill (53) which consisted of a dark brown grey silty clay with frequent calcareous gravel inclusions. Three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from this fill that can be dated between the late 11th - late 14th century.

Postholes 1, 2 and 3

Postholes 1, 2 and 3 were all approximately 0.30m in diameter and 0.05–0.07m deep and each contained a single fill (50, 51, 52 respectively) which consisted of a mid brown grey silty clay with frequent calcareous gravel inclusions. No finds were recovered from any of these features.

Pit 5

Pit 5 was 0.75m in diameter and 0.10m deep and contained a single fill (54) of a mid brown grey silty clay with frequent flint and calcareous gravel inclusions. A single piece sheep/goat rib was recovered from this fill.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised three sherds with a total weight of 10g all from gully 4 (fill 53). They were all Newbury A/B ware. Two of the fragments were plain bodysherds, the other a rim from a shallow bowl. They are all in very good condition, and appear reliably stratified.

Newbury 'A/B' ware: Late 11th – late 14th century (Mephram 1997, 51-2). A range of sand-, flint- and limestone-tempered wares. Sparse to moderate limestone up to 2mm, rounded white or clear quartz up to 0.5mm, angular fragments of white, grey or black flint.

Animal Bone by Danielle Milbank

Two fragments of animal bone were recovered from fill (54) of pit 5. These comprised a sheep/goat rib (proximal end) weighing 12g and a small piece of long bone from an unidentifiable animal weighing 3g.

Palaeoenvironmental evidence by Rosalind McKenna

Bulk soil samples taken from four sealed contexts were processed using standard water flotation methods. Details of methodology and identification guides are in the site archive. Charred plant macrofossils were present in three of the samples. The results of the plant macrofossil analysis can be seen in Appendix 2. The preservation of the charred remains was poor and identifiable cereal grains were recovered from just a single sample- four were wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains and there was also a single barley (*Hordeum* sp.) grain.

Charcoal fragments were present in all four of the samples, but again the preservation was poor. The total range of identifiable taxa comprises oak (*Quercus*), willow/poplar (*Salix/Populus*), ash (*Fraxinus*) and alder (*Alnus*). A local environment with a relatively wide range of trees and shrubs is indicated from the charcoal of the site. As seen in Appendix 3, oak, alder and willow/poplar are all represented in similar quantities, with a single ash fragment also recorded. It is possible that these were the preferred fuel woods obtained from a local environment containing a broader choice of species.

The samples produced little environmental material of interpretable value. As all of the plant remains were found together with charcoal, it may suggest that waste or spilt grain were put on the fire with other rubbish and a small fraction became charred without burning up, and joined the domestic ash on the rubbish heap.

Conclusion

The only dated feature was the gully (4), which is of medieval date. Based only on their proximity, it is possible the other features are contemporary. The features observed were concentrated on the eastern perimeter of the site, and the lack of features to the west is most likely explained by the proximity to the river and the flooding

this area is susceptible to. However, neither the earlier work just to the north nor the current work have revealed evidence of any house sites which must have lain somewhere in the vicinity.

Although of limited extent and producing few finds, this investigation adds to the impression from the earlier watching brief (Ford 2004) that the medieval occupation of Lambourn extended north-eastwards across the river from a date early in the period. Further work in this quarter of the town may reveal if this use continued uninterrupted into post-medieval times or if it was an outlying zone where late medieval contraction occurred as in many other places.

References

- Astill, G G, 1978, *Historic towns in Berkshire; an archaeological appraisal*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ **2** Reading
- BGS, 1947, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 267, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 2004, '16-18 Oxford Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **04/47**, Reading
- Hindmarch, E and Ford, S, 2003, '18-20 High Street, Lambourn, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **02/35**, Reading
- King, C, 1999a, 'The Red Lion Hotel, Oxford Street, Lambourn, An archaeological watching brief', Foundations Archaeology, Swindon
- King, C, 1999b, 'The Red Lion Hotel, Oxford Street, Lambourn, West Berkshire, An archaeological evaluation', Foundations Archaeology, Swindon
- King, C, 2000, 'Bourne House Stables, Oxford Road, Lambourn, West Berkshire, An archaeological evaluation: interim report', Foundations Archaeology, Swindon
- King, R, in prep, 'Bourne House Stables, Oxford Road, Lambourn, West Berkshire, An archaeological excavation', Foundations Archaeology, Swindon
- Mepham, L, 1997 'Pottery', in A G Vince, S J Lobb, J C Richards and L Mepham, *Excavations in Newbury, Berkshire, 1979 – 1990*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **13**, Salisbury, 45–67
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
- Wallis, S, 2003 '2 Newbury Street, Lambourn, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **03/79**, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Feature details

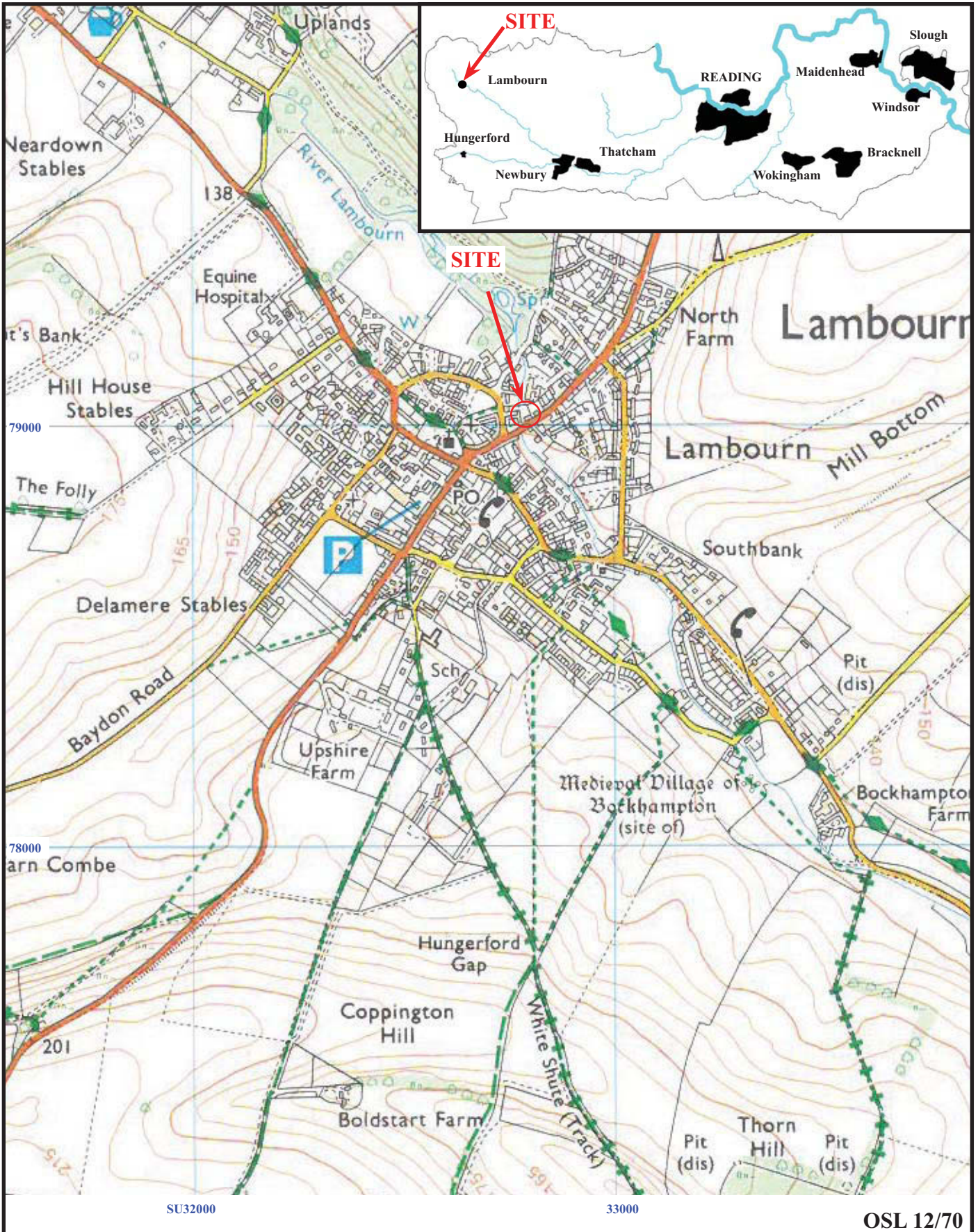
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	50	Posthole		
2	51	Posthole		
3	52	Posthole		
4	53	Gully terminus	Medieval	pottery
5	54	Pit		

Appendix 2: Plant Macrofossils

<i>Sample</i>	2	3	4	
<i>Feature</i>	2	4	5	
<i>Context</i>	51	53	54	
<i>Feature Type</i>	<i>Posthole</i>	<i>Gully</i>	<i>Pit</i>	
LATIN BINOMAL				COMMON NAME
<i>Hordeum</i> spp.	1	-	-	Barley
<i>Triticum</i> spp.	4	-	-	Wheat
Indet.	18	2	4	Indeterminate Cereal

Appendix 3: Charcoal

<i>Sample</i>	2	3	4	
<i>Feature</i>	2	4	5	
<i>Context</i>	51	53	54	
<i>Feature Type</i>	<i>Posthole</i>	<i>Gully</i>	<i>Pit</i>	
<i>No. frags</i>	20+	20+	20+	
<i>Max. size (mm)</i>	4	15	5	
LATIN BINOMAL				COMMON NAME
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	-	3	2	Alder
<i>Salix / Populus</i>	9	-	-	Willow / Poplar
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	-	-	1	Ash
<i>Quercus</i>	-	4	2	Oak
Indeterminate	11	13	15	Indeterminate

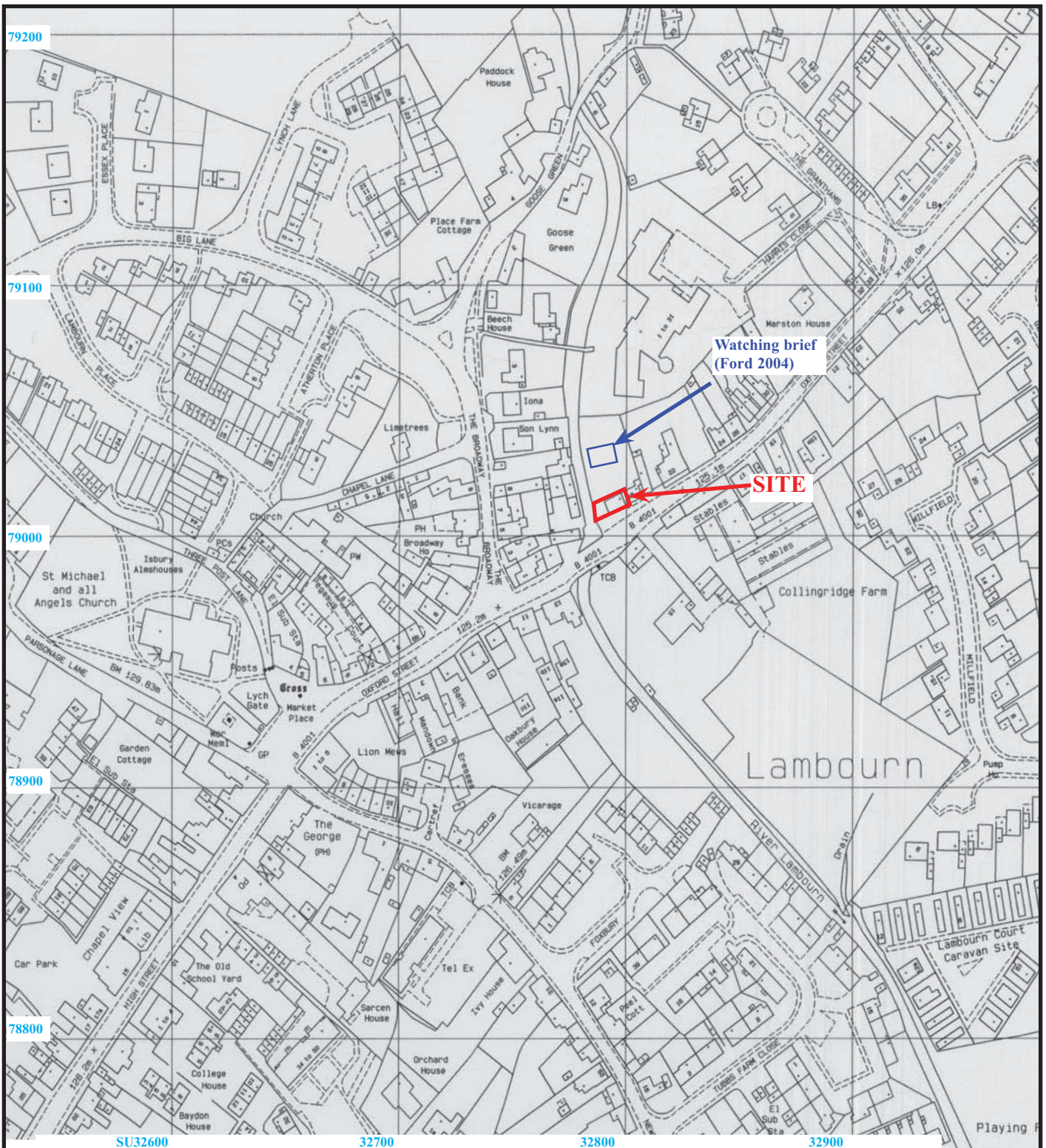


**18-20 Oxford Street, Lambourn,
West Berkshire, 2014
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 1. Location of site within Lambourn and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 171 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



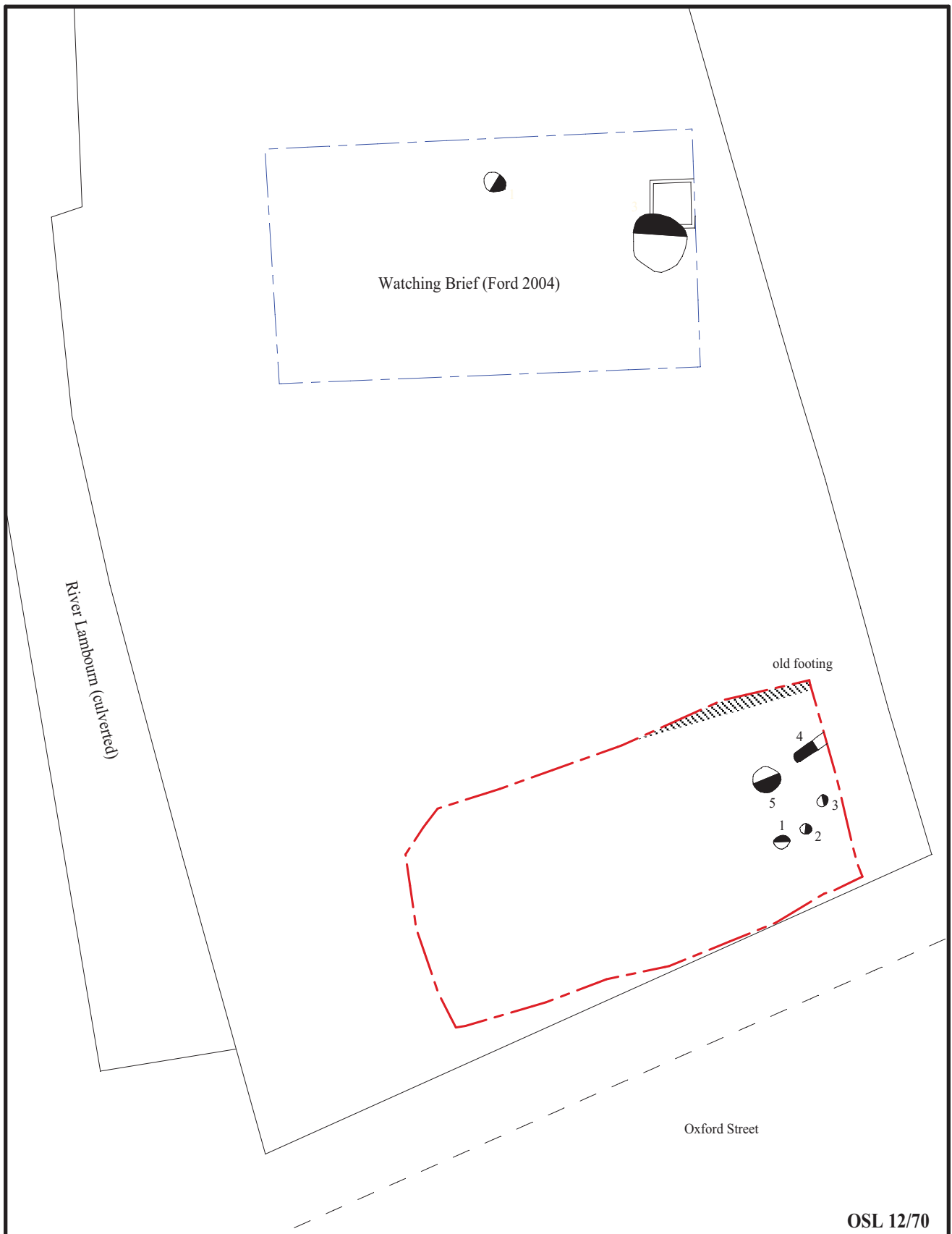
OSL 12/70



**18-20 Oxford Street, Lambourn,
West Berkshire, 2014
Archaeological Recording Action**
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Oxford Street.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:2500

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

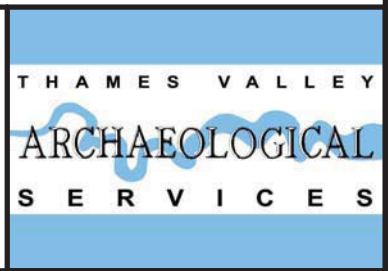


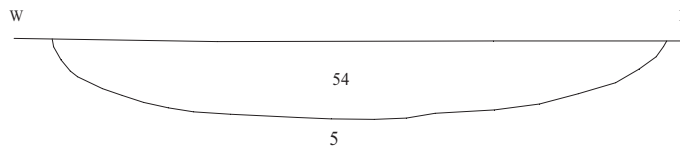
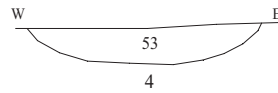
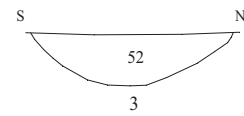
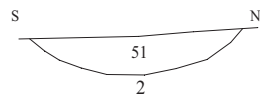
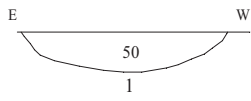
OSL 12/70



**18-20 Oxford Street, Lambourn
West Berkshire, 2014
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 3. Plan showing 2014 recording action and 2004 watching brief





OSL 12/70

**18-20 Oxford Street, Lambourn,
West Berkshire, 2014
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 4. Sections.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 1. Gully terminus 4, looking east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.



Plate 2. Pit 5, looking north west, Scales: 0.5m.

OSL 12/70

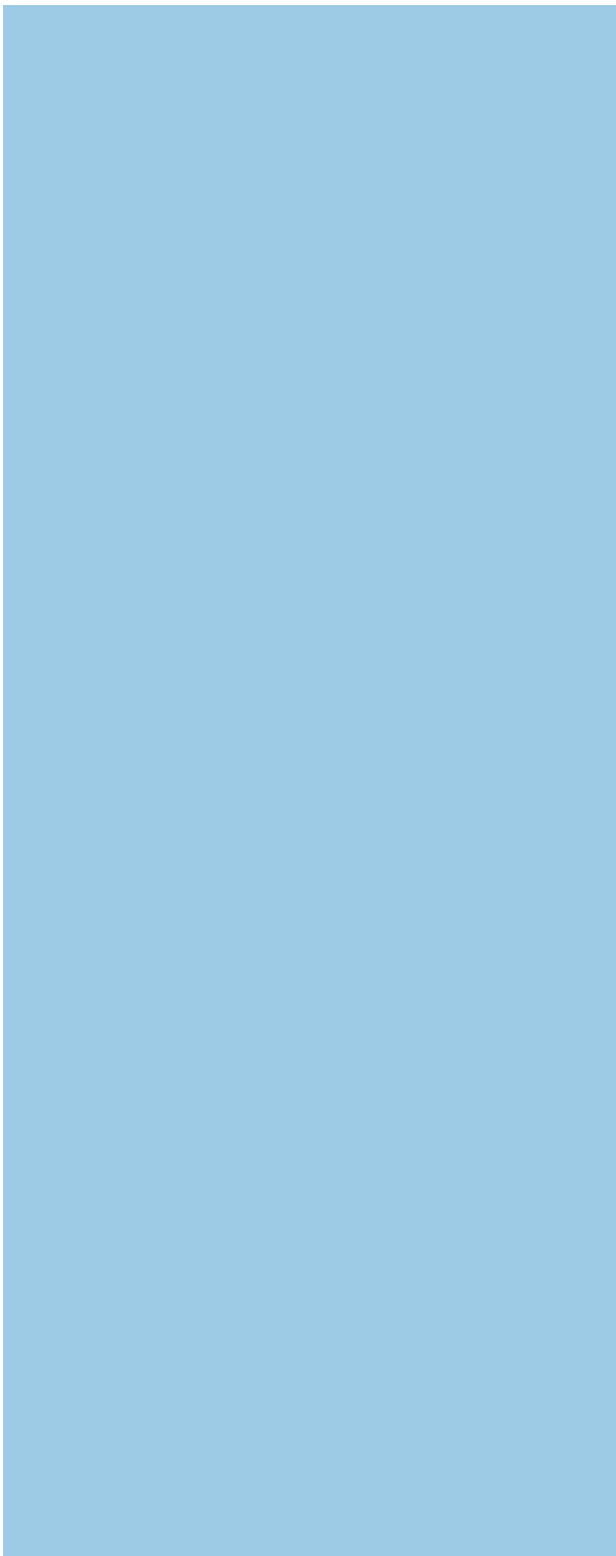
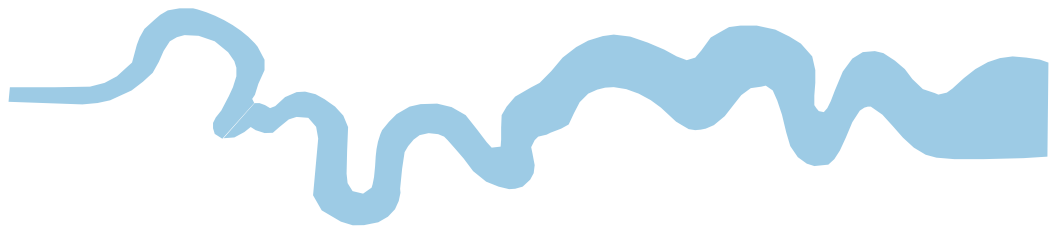
18-20 Oxford Street, Lambourn,
West Berkshire, 2014
Archaeological recording action
Plates 1 - 2.

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**