

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**20 High Street, Eton,
Berkshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Susan Porter and Lizzie Lewins

Site Code: 20 HSE14/235

(SU 9668 7760)

**20 High Street, Eton,
Berkshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs Kelsall

by Susan Porter and Lizzie Lewins

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 20 HSE14/235

February 2015

Summary

Site name: 20 High Street, Eton, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9668 7760

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 5-9th February 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: 20 HSE 14/235

Summary of results: No deposits of archaeological interest were revealed and no artefacts recovered. Deep post-medieval made ground deposits were observed but the natural geology was not encountered..

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with an approved local museum willing to accept the material in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 11.02.15

20 High Street, Eton, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 14/235

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 20 High Street, Eton, Berkshire, SU 9668 7760 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Kelsall of 20 High Street, Eton, Berkshire SL4 6AX.

Planning permission (app no 14/03177) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for construction of a new extension to the rear of 20 High Street Eton. The consent includes a condition relating to archaeology which requires that a watching brief be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology, advisors to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Lizzie Lewins and Susan Porter between 5-9th February 2015 and the site code is 20 HSE 14/235.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with a local museum willing to accept material in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Eton lies on the north bank of the River Thames, opposite Windsor in the Middle Thames Valley. The site is located on the east side of the High Street. The river curves round the settlement south and east of the site. The site lies at a height of approximately 20m above Ordnance Datum. The geology according to the British Geological Survey is Quaternary drift flood-plain gravel (BGS 1981), but this was not encountered in the watching brief as the trenches did not go below made ground levels.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief prepared by Mr Roland Smith of Berkshire Archaeology. In summary the archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley, with a wealth of prehistoric and later archaeological finds recorded for the

area during archaeological fieldwork, aerial photography, mineral extraction and dredging of the nearby River Thames (eg Ford 1987, Foreman *et al* 2002, Gates 1975). More specifically, the site lies within the historic core of Eton which is of medieval and possibly Late Saxon origins (Astill 1978, Preston 2005) with an extensive excavation of the medieval waterfront at King Stable Street to the south (Blinkhorn and Pugh 2000). Evaluation at Eton Court to the south revealed a probable medieval/ Post medieval boundary ditch (Bray 2013), whilst evaluation to the south west at Rafts Boathouse revealed late post-medieval layers up to a metre in depth, overlying features of probable medieval date (Weale and Porter 2013). However field evaluation at Gowers Yard (Taylor 2006) and watching briefs at 39 and 89 High Street (Hammond 2003, Howell 1995) did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular overburden stripping prior to ground reduction, the digging of foundation trenches and service runs and any deeply invasive landscaping as necessary. Archaeological deposits that were threatened by the groundworks were to be excavated and recorded, with sufficient time to do this provided within the groundworkers schedules. If plant were to be used to dig foundation or service trenches then it was to be fitted with a toothless bucket.

Results

Two foundation trenches were excavated by hand as part of the new development (Figs 3 and 4, Pl. 1-4). The north-south foundation was excavated between the existing house wall and the boundary fence for a distance of 4.40m and was 0.70m wide. The east-west oriented foundation slot was excavated between the eastern wall of the existing house and the northern end of the north south foundation slot for a distance of 5m.

Both foundation slots were 0.70m wide and excavated to a depth of 1.10m. Natural geology was not encountered within the slots and the stratigraphy comprised Post-medieval made ground deposits. These were broadly similar with minor variations. The stratigraphy of the north-south foundation (Pl. 1) comprised 0.15m bright yellow sandy material (patio underlay), and 0.15m dark grey silty sand (old) topsoil, overlying 0.32m mid brown grey silty sand made ground with brick and tile inclusions. This in turn overlay 0.48m of dark brown/black made ground with brick and tile inclusions, animal bone and a single sherd of 'bone china' pottery.

The stratigraphy of the east-west foundation (Pl. 2) slot comprised 0.40m of topsoil truncated by a modern fencepost cut, and 0.20m of mid brown grey silty sand made ground with brick and tile inclusions, overlying 0.30m grey clayey made ground. This in turn overlay 0.20m dark brown/ black silty sand made ground with brick and tile inclusions along with clay pipe, animal bone and oyster shell.

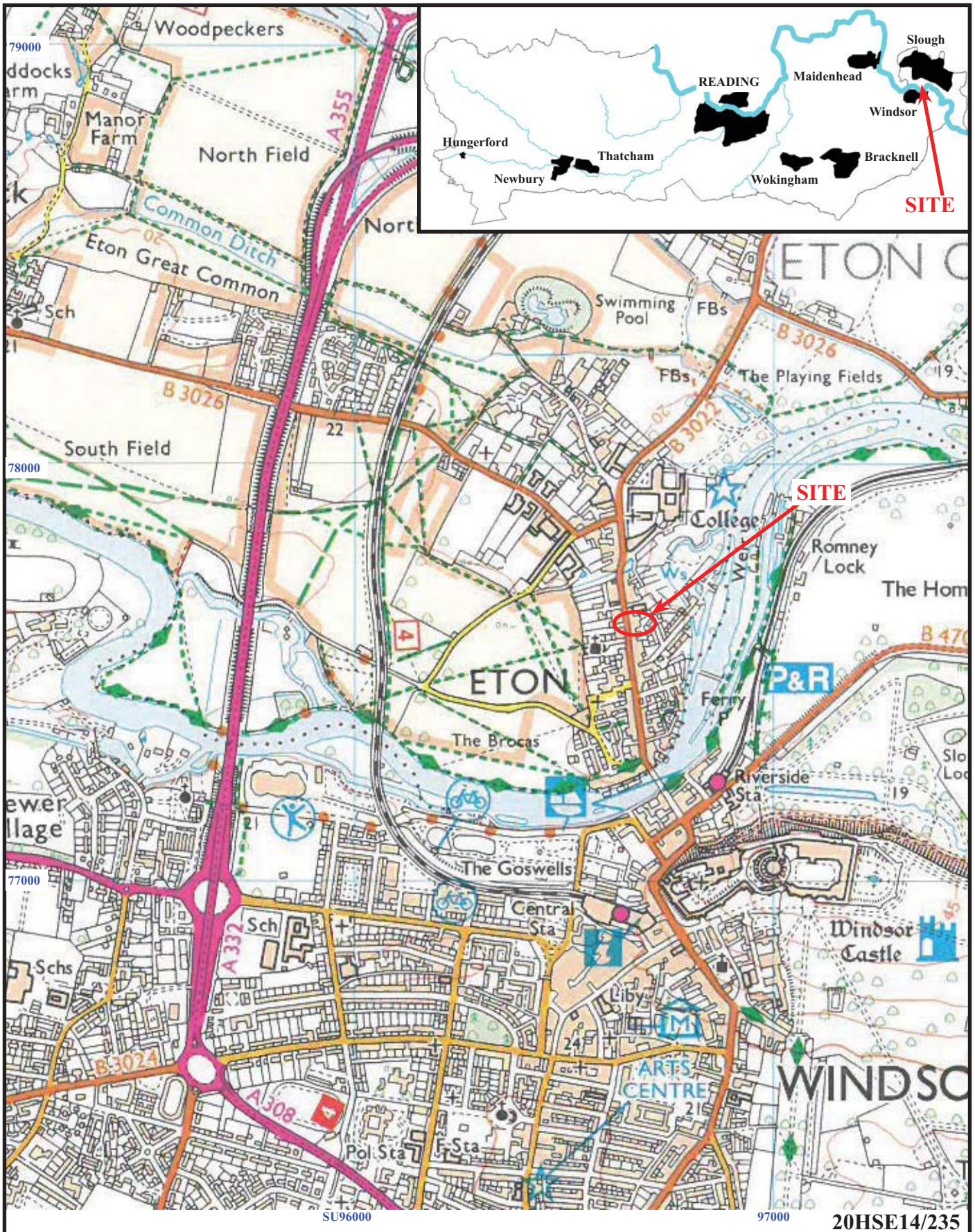
A modern drainage pipe was observed in the north-south foundation slot 1.20m north of the wall of the house. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Conclusion

Although the site's location within the historic core of Eton has a high potential for archaeology, no deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during the watching brief. This may have been a result of the presence of deep deposits of post-medieval made ground overlying the archaeologically relevant horizons.

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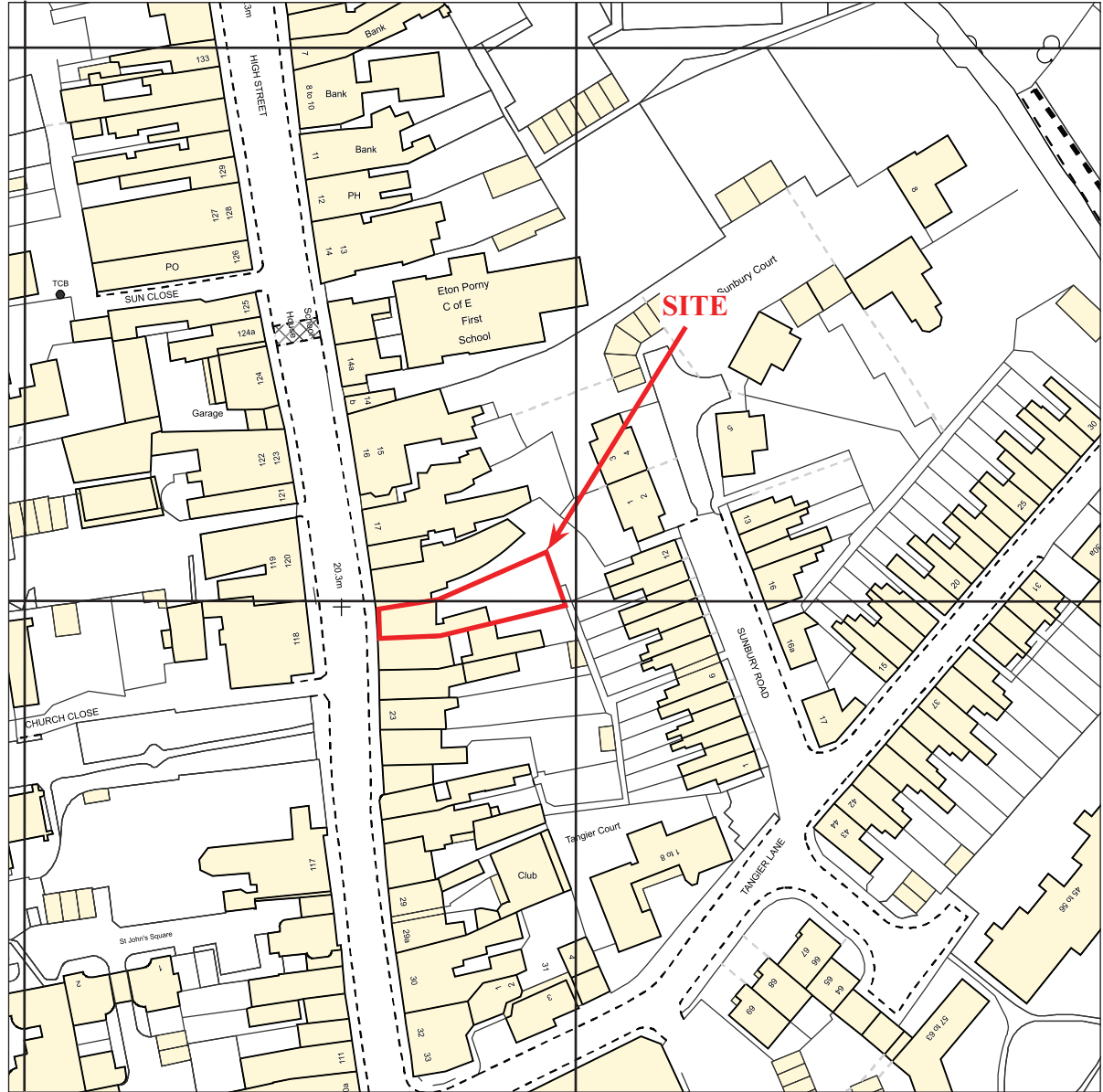
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Figure 1. Location of site within Eton and Berkshire.

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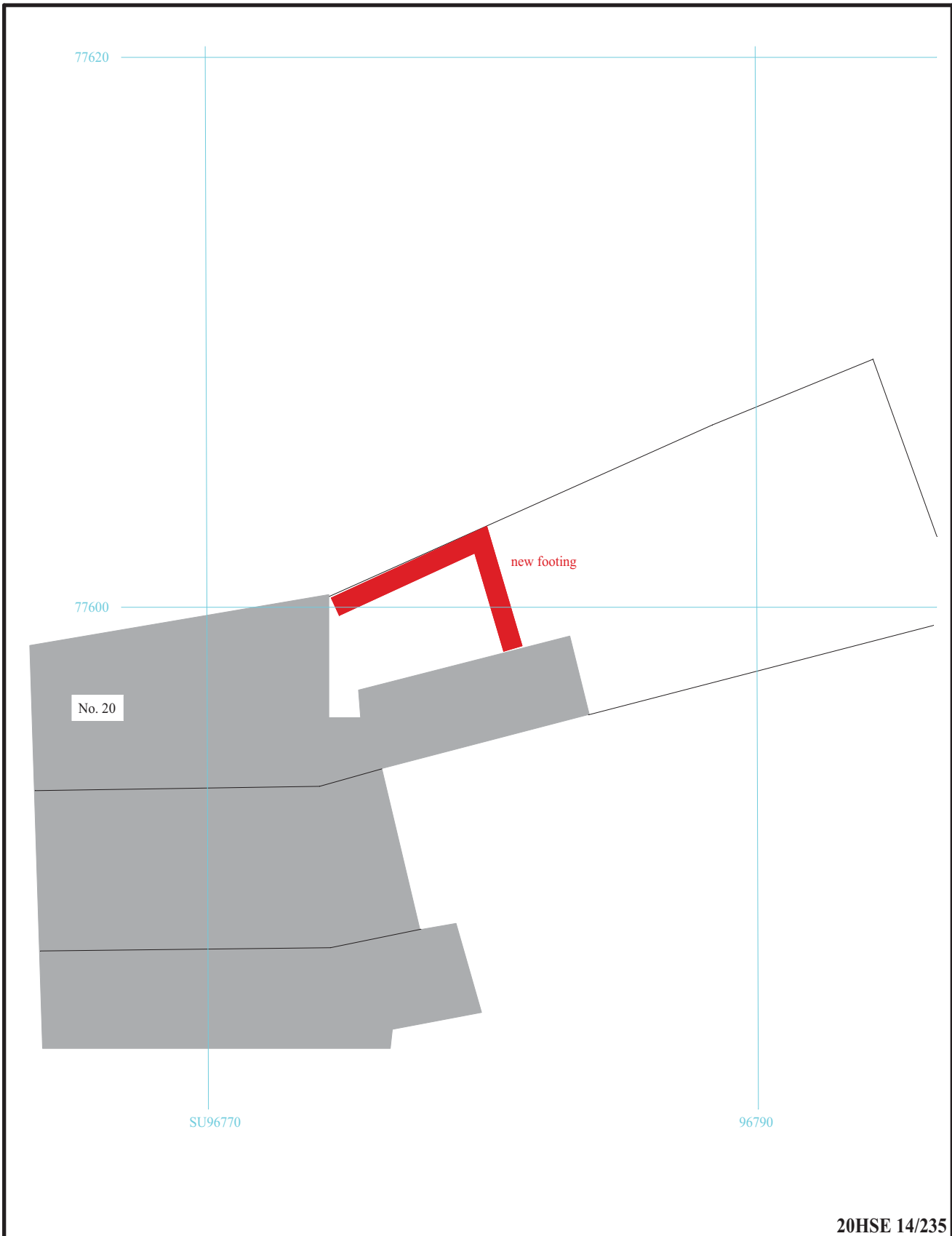


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off High Steet.

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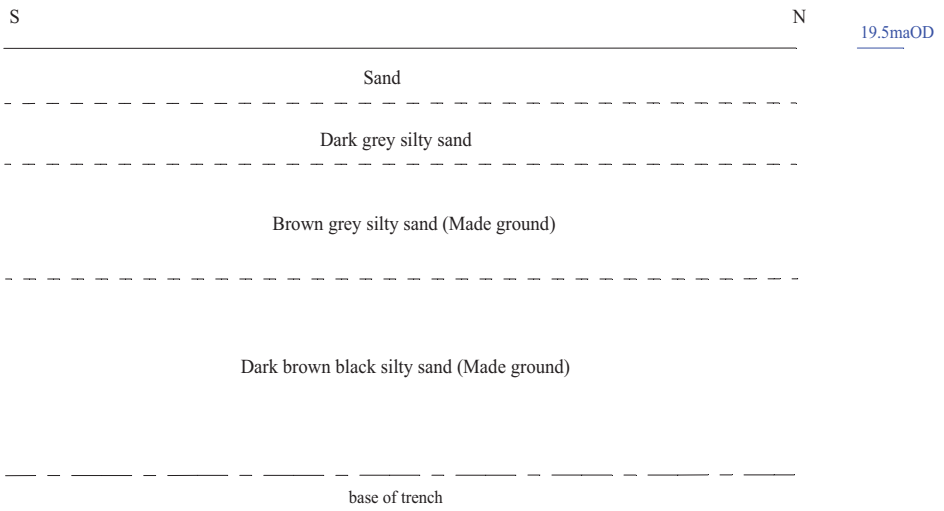


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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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Figure 4. Representative section.





Plate 1. Footing section, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. New footing, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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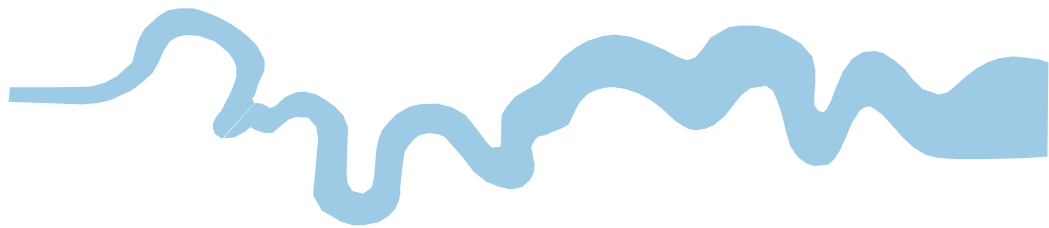
Plates 1 - 2.

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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
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**