

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**95 Bath Road, Thatcham,  
West Berkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Tim Dawson**

**Site Code: 95BRT15/108**

**(SU 5068 6765)**

**95 Bath Road, Thatcham,  
West Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr and Mrs Goffin**

by Tim Dawson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 95BRT 15/108

**June 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** 95 Bath Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 5068 6765

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 27th May 2015

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Tim Dawson

**Site code:** 95BRT 15/108

**Area of site:** c.46.9sq m

**Summary of results:** The excavation of the footing trenches was monitored but only late post-medieval layers containing coal and ceramic building material were identified.

**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.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 17.06.15
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# **95 Bath Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Tim Dawson

**Report 15/108**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 95 Bath Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire, RG18 3BD (SU 5068 6765) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mrs Jenny Goffin of 95 Bath Road, Thatcham.

A planning consent (13/02484/HOUSE) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for a single storey extension to the existing house. The consent includes a condition (7) relating to archaeology, which requires a watching brief to be implemented during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Unitary Authority's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Alex Godden, Archaeological Officer at West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson on 27th May 2015 and the site code is 95BRT 15/108.

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 at the western end of the A4 (Bath Road) where it bisects Thatcham. Bath Road itself passes along the southern edge of the site while to the west is a footpath which follows the site boundary and to the north and east further housing (Fig. 2). The extension is to be constructed against the western wall of number 95, a large late 19th century house. This is an area of concrete slab driveway which previously led to a garage that has been demolished in preparation for the building work. The development area is flat at a height of approximately 78m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as Thatcham Gravel (BGS 1971) although this was only observed in the site's northern extent.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing note prepared by Ms Sarah Orr, West Berkshire Acting Archaeological Officer. In summary, the proposed development is located within an area of

Roman archaeology with a section of the Roman road observed in front of 95 Bath Road in the 1920s and 1930s. Adjacent to the road has been found wells, pits, gullies and foundations (Harris 1930; 1937), including further settlement evidence excavated at 69-73 Bath Road (Pine 2010). An evaluation at 123–129 Bath Road identified a probable Roman roadside ditch an undated pit and a posthole (Pine, 2007).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits or finds affected by the new construction work. The groundworks consisted only of the digging of the foundations for the new extension. This was undertaken using a minidigger with a 0.6m wide toothless bucket excavating trenches c.0.6m wide and between 0.72m and 0.92m deep. The spoil removed was monitored for finds and any potential archaeological deposits were hand-cleaned although none required further excavation.

## **Results**

The excavation of the footing trenches was observed around the perimeter of the new extension (Fig. 3). They were at their deepest (0.92m) at the northern end and shallowest in the south (0.72m) due to the changing nature of the ground. This was found to consist primarily of layers of silty sand and gravel, most of which had fragments of coal and abraded ceramic building material (CBM) within them (Fig. 4). It was only at the southern end that natural gravel geology was encountered. The northern stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of mixed topsoil, ash and coal, 0.37m of dark brown-grey silty sand with stray deposits of ash and coal and 0.16m of coarse mixed gravel overlying a deposit of dark brown-black silty sand with gravel inclusions and very abraded fragments of CBM.

Further south, in the western footing trench, the stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of mixed topsoil, ash and coal, 0.13m dark brown-grey silty sand with small fragments of coal and CBM, 0.06m of pale yellow sand, 0.38m of dark brown-grey silty sand and 0.16m of dark brown-black silty sand with gravel inclusions overlying a dark orange-brown pea gravel in the base of the trench. At the southern end of the excavations the exposed stratigraphy consisted of 0.09m of mixed topsoil, ash and coal, 0.40m of dark brown-grey silty sand with fragments of coal and CBM and 0.18m of fine gravel in a loose brown sandy matrix overlying the natural mid orange sand and gravel. Beyond the fragments of coal and abraded CBM no finds were recovered from any of the layers.

## **Finds**

No finds at all were recovered. All fragments of coal and CBM were deemed of relatively modern date and not retained.

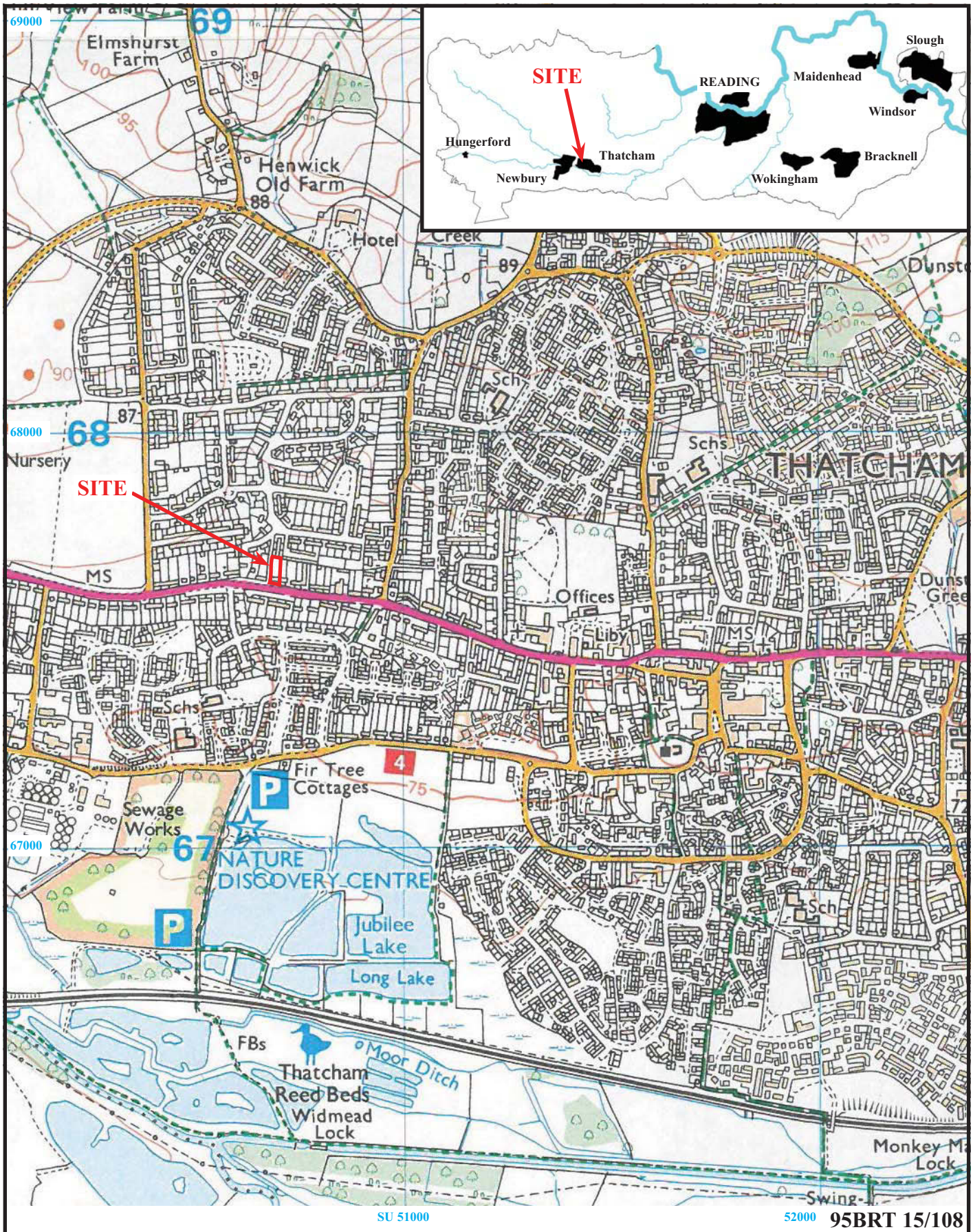
## **Conclusion**

The excavation of the foundation trenches was monitored but no finds or features of archaeological interest were observed. Records of the house record that it was constructed on top of a gravel pit (Mrs Goffin pers. comm.). It is possible therefore that the layers containing coal and CBM are late post-medieval backfill laid down to prepare the site for the construction of the house in the 1880s.

## **References**

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- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Pine, J, 2010, 'Excavation of the Silchester to Cirencester Roman road, and adjacent Roman occupation deposits, at 69, 71A and 73 Bath Road, Thatcham, 2007', in J Pine, *Archaeological investigations along the line of Ermin Street, in West Berkshire, 1992-2008, Exploring Prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlement*, TVAS Monograph **12**, Reading, 19–32
- Pine, J, 2007, '123–129a Bath Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire: An Archaeological Evaluation', TVAS Report 07/142, Reading





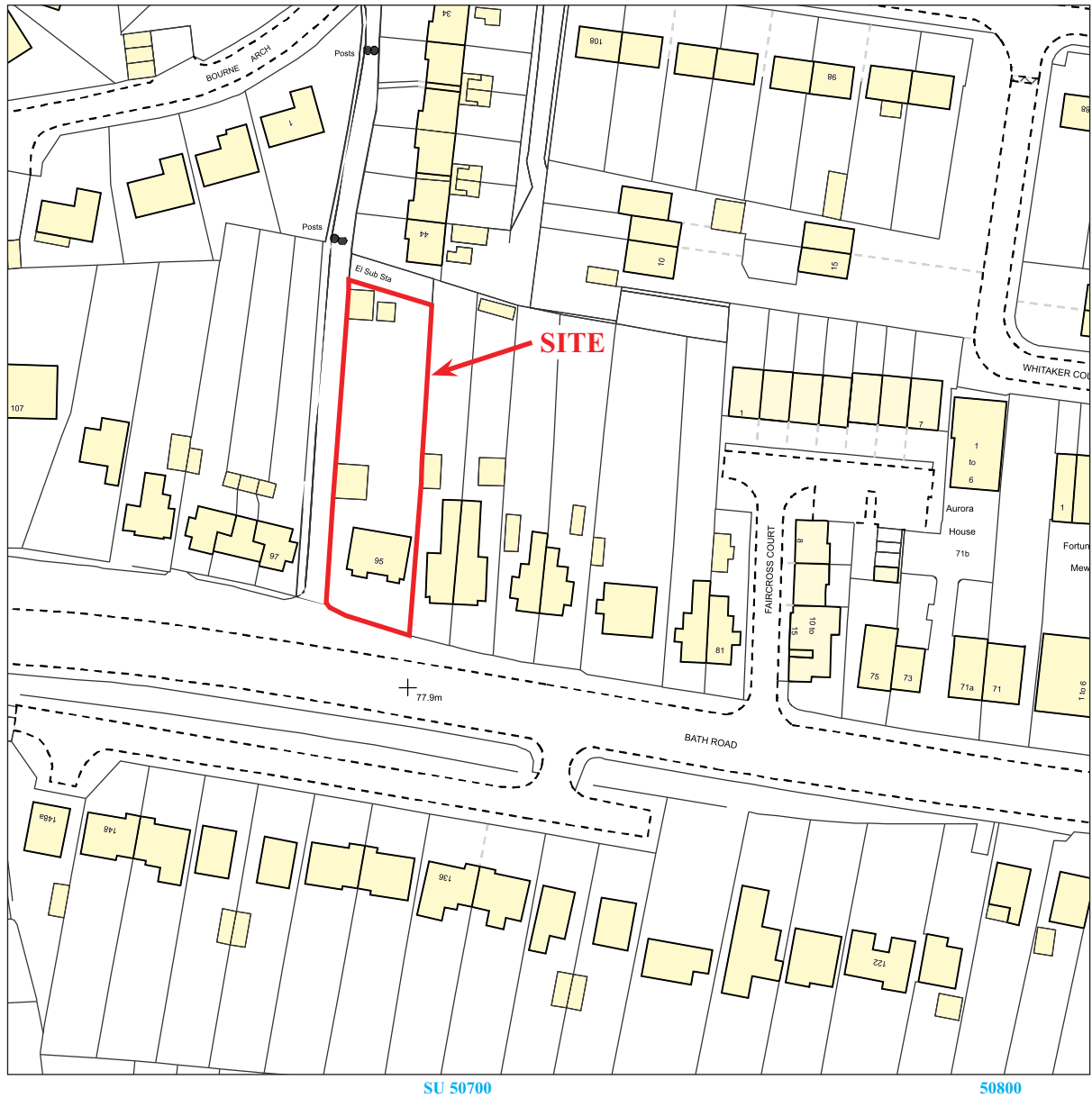
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Figure 1. Location of site within Thatcham and West Berkshire.

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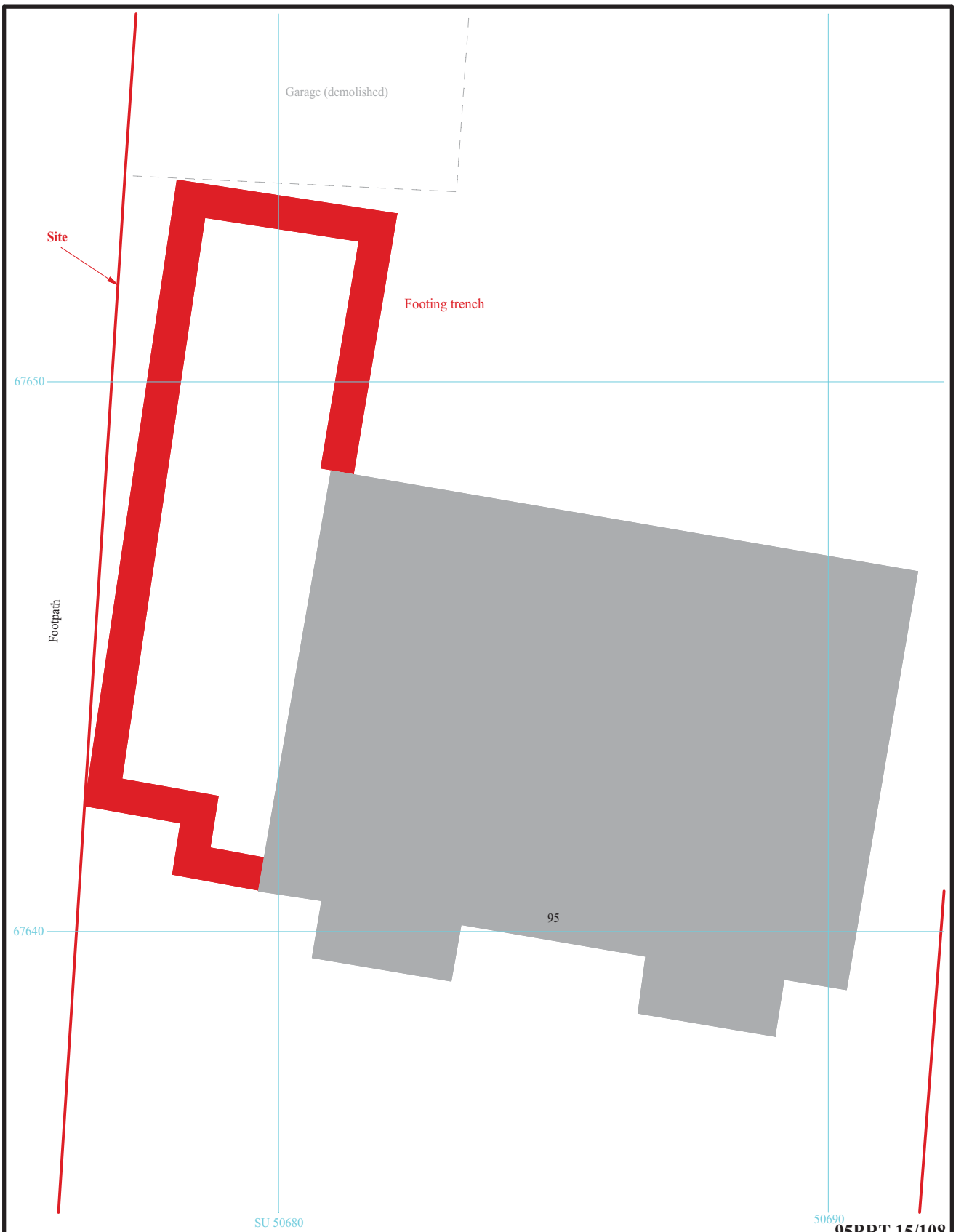


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Bath Road.

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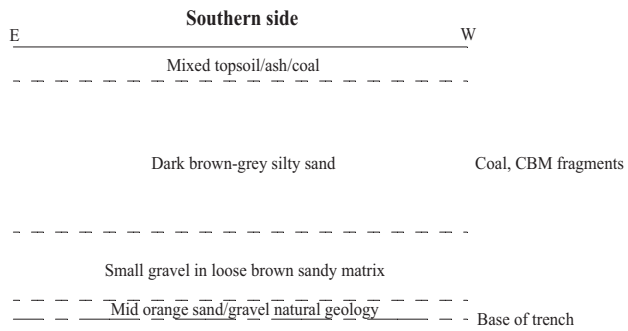
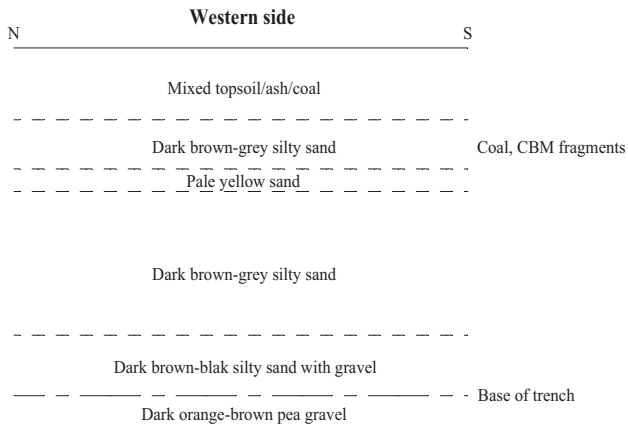
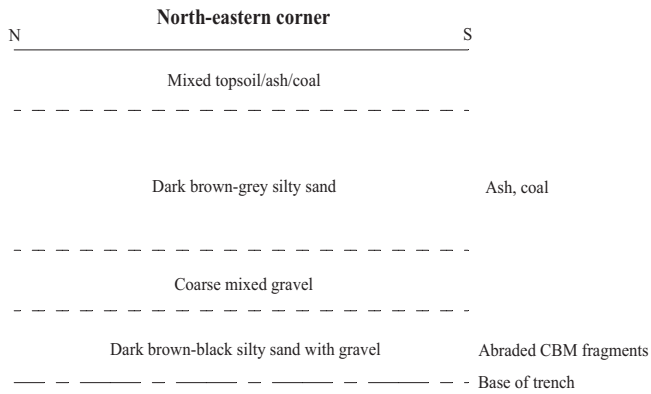
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Figure 3. Location of the footings.



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Figure 4. Representative sections.





Plate 1. General view of the site, looking south. Scales 2m, 1m, 0.5m.



Plate 2. Section in the northern footing trench, looking north. Scales 2m, 1m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

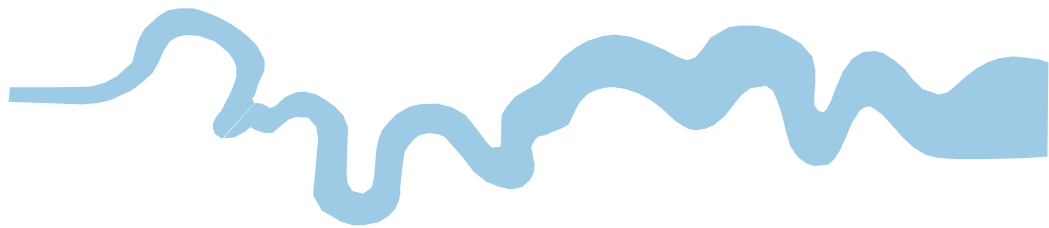
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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
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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