

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**1 Abbey Cottages, Sutton Courtenay,  
Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Andy Taylor**

**Site Code: ACS15/134**

**(SU 5032 9400)**

# **1 Abbey Cottages, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr and Mrs Russell**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ACS 15/134

**August 2015**

## Summary

**Site name:** 1 Abbey Cottages, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 5032 9400

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 15th July and 12th August 2015

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andy Mundin and Andy Taylor

**Site code:** ACS 15/134

**Area of site:** c. 125 sq m observed within a plot of c. 0.25 ha

**Summary of results:** The watching brief observed reduced digs for the new extension as well as a detached garage and drainage trenches. No finds or deposits of an archaeological nature were observed during the course of the watching brief

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museum Service 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 All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: [www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 17.08.15 Steve Preston ✓ 14.08.15
---

# 1 Abbey Cottages, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Report 15/134

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 1 Abbey Cottages, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire (SU 5032 9400) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Gavin Bradley of Bradley Project Construction Ltd, 6 Chestnut Close, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 1PD on behalf of Mr and Mrs Russell.

Planning permission (P14/V0978/HH) has been gained from the Vale of White Horse District Council for the construction of a new two-storey extension and detached garage. Due to the potential of below ground archaeological features the consent is subject to two conditions (7 and 8) requiring an archaeological watching brief to be maintained during the period of 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 Hugh Coddington, Archaeology Team leader with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, the advisers to the District Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Mundin and Andy Taylor on 15th July and 12th August and the site code is ACS 15/134.

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

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located down a short lane just off the High Street, close to the junction of Church Street and High Street (Fig. 1). The Green is situated immediately to the north, with The Abbey, a grange building with 14th-century elements immediately to the west. It is an irregular plot of land, currently the gardens associated with the property (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as First Terrace River Gravels (BGS 1971) although a mixture of greensand, clay and gravels were actually observed. The site is at approximately 50m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief provided by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Coddington 2015). In summary, the site lies in an area of considerable archaeological potential as it lies adjacent to Abbey House, which was a former rectory and is based on a medieval hall with a solar for part of a Benedictine grange dated from 1320. The cottages themselves are of 17th-century origin. Sutton Courtenay has late Saxon and medieval origins and is documented in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002). Fieldwork in the area suggest growth along the Drayton Road from dispersed farmsteads developing during the medieval period, such as those found at Drayton (Challinor *et al.* 2004; Anthony and Taylor 2006; Porter 2013). In the surrounding area, cropmarks and aerial photography have uncovered a wealth of features (Benson and Miles 1974, map 34), ranging from settlement to funerary activity of Prehistoric to Saxon date including a palace site. Though some of these areas have been encroached on by quarrying in the mid-20th century, some areas, such as the north of the village, have been investigated. A recent watching brief on Abingdon Road identified features associated with this landscape (Mundin and McNicoll-Norbury 2009). Of particular note was the recovery of Early/Middle Saxon Ipswich-ware pottery, a rare find for the area. A watching brief just to the south, however found nothing of interest (Dawson 2013).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This would involve monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and include observation of surface stripping, the excavation of foundation and service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work as necessary.

Two areas of ground reduction were observed for the new extension and detached garage as well as a drainage trench (Fig. 3), which were dug with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision and spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

## **Results**

### Extension Area (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

This area was reduced by 0.80m to the top of the natural geology but would be reduced a further 1.20m for the new concrete base. The stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.20m of topsoil overlying 0.60m of a mid grey silty clay subsoil that contained fragments of modern ceramic building material, china and clinker. This overlay a mix

of greensand, limestone gravel and clay natural geology. A soakaway or redundant cess pit was observed on the eastern edge of the stripped area. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Garage Area (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

This area was reduced by 0.90m and consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.60m of subsoil overlying gravel and greensand natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Drainage Trench (Fig. 3)

This trench measured 0.40m wide and was dug to a depth of 0.60m and consisted of 0.20m of topsoil overlying subsoil. No archaeological features were observed.

### **Finds**

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered during the watching brief.

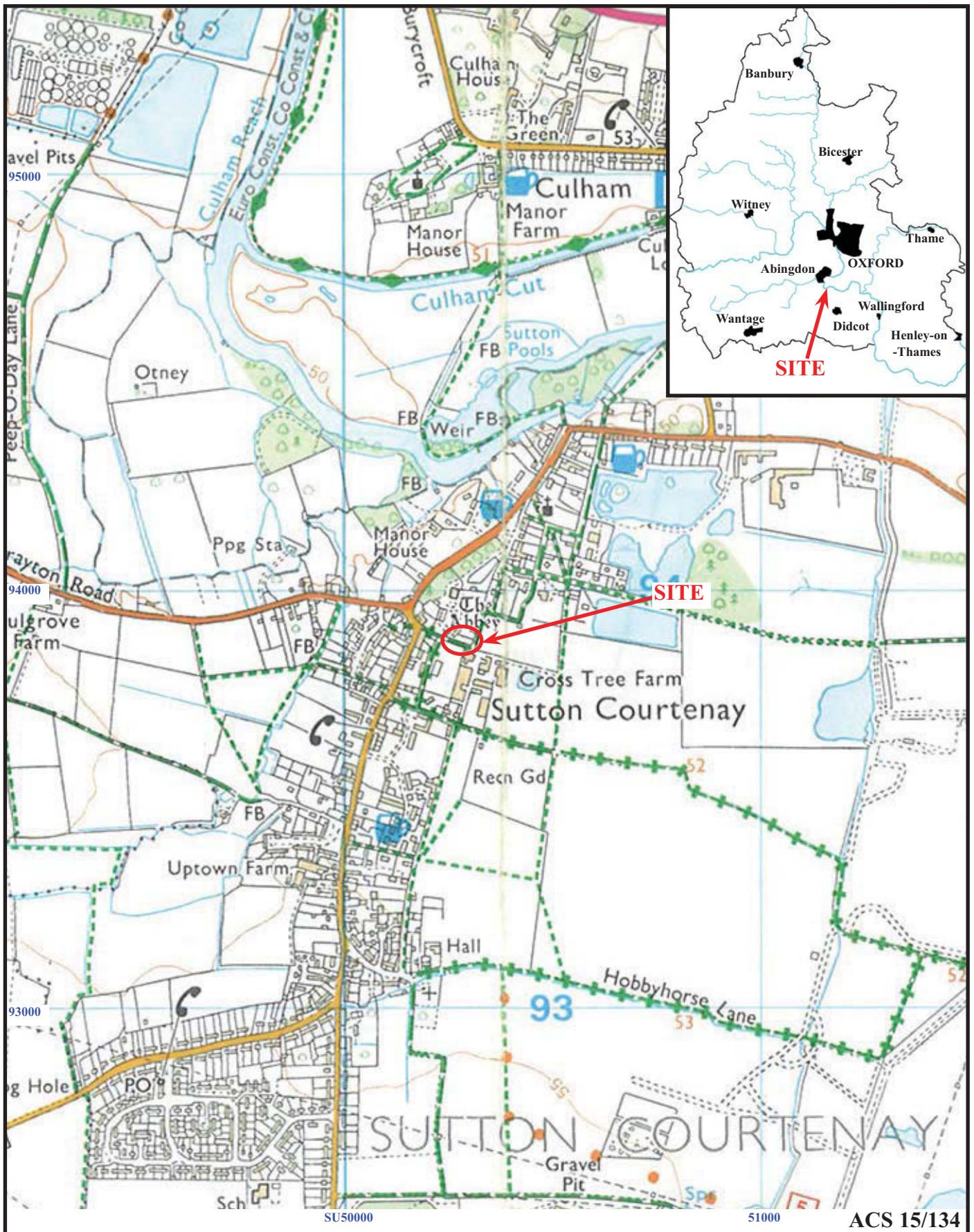
### **Conclusion**

Despite the site's location in an area of high archaeological potential no finds or deposits of an archaeological nature were observed during the course of the watching brief.

### **References**

- Anthony, S and Taylor, K, 2006, 'Medieval paddocks at 54–80 Abingdon Road, Drayton', in S Anthony, G Hull, J Pine and K Taylor, *Excavations in Medieval Abingdon and Drayton, Oxfordshire*, TVAS Monogr **8**, 93-106
- Benson, D and Miles, D, 1974, *The Upper Thames Valley: an archaeological survey of the river gravels*, Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit Survey **2**, Oxford.
- Challinor, D, *et al*, 2004, 'Excavations at Manor Farm, Drayton, Oxfordshire,' *Oxoniensia*, **68** (for 2003), 279–311
- BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 253, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Coddington, H, 1 'Abbey Cottages, Sutton Courtenay, Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, Oxford
- Dawson, T 2013, 2-3 Abbey Cottages, The Green, Sutton Courtenay, an archaeological watching brief, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 12/127, Reading
- Mundin, A and McNicoll-Norbury, J, 2009, '2 Abingdon Road, Sutton Courtenay, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 09/43, Reading
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Porter, S, 2013, 'Peewit Farm, Drayton Road, Sutton Courtenay; an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 13/39, Reading
- Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

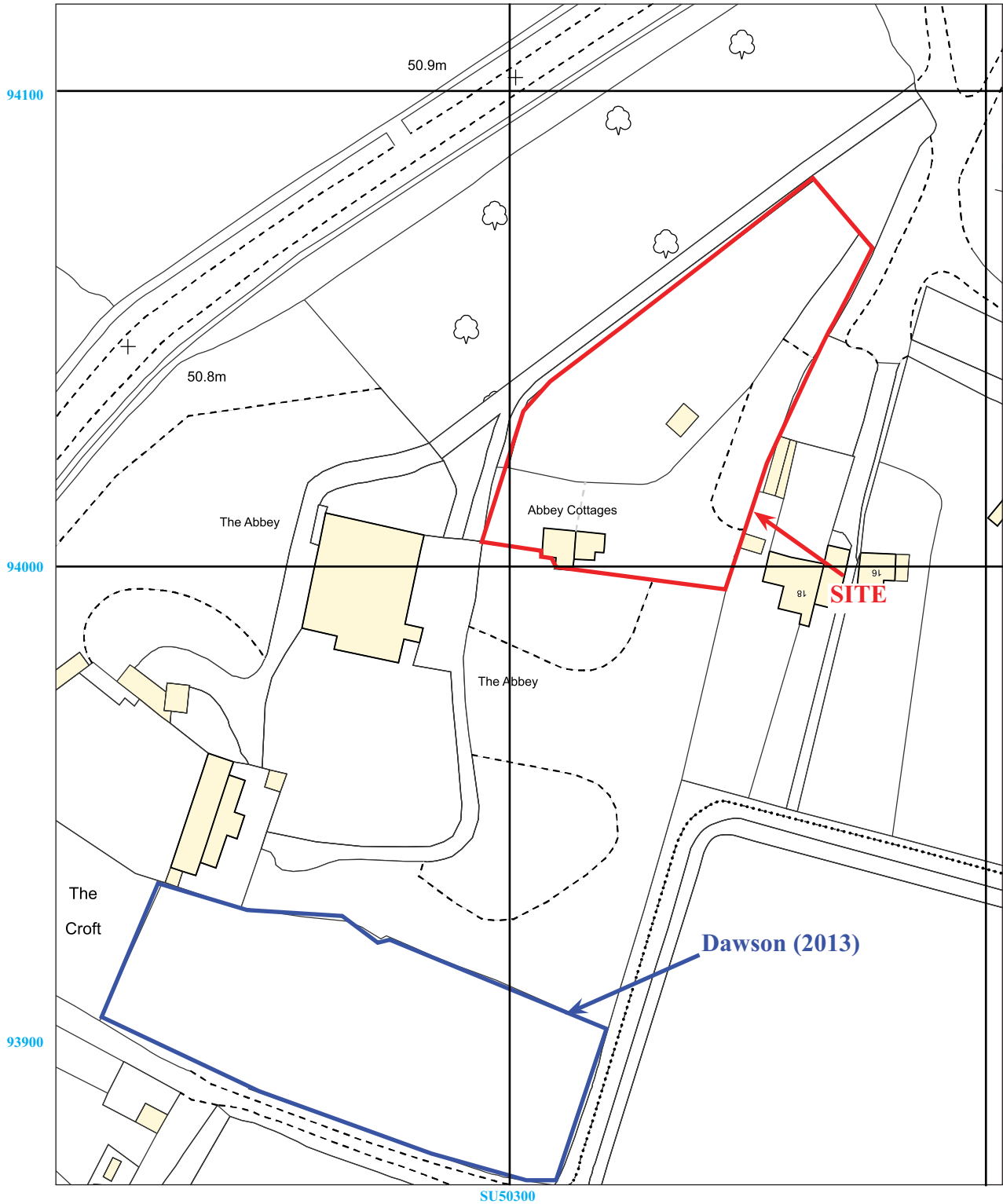




**1 Abbey Cottages, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Sutton Courtenay and Oxfordshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 170 at 1:12500  
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880



ACS 15/134



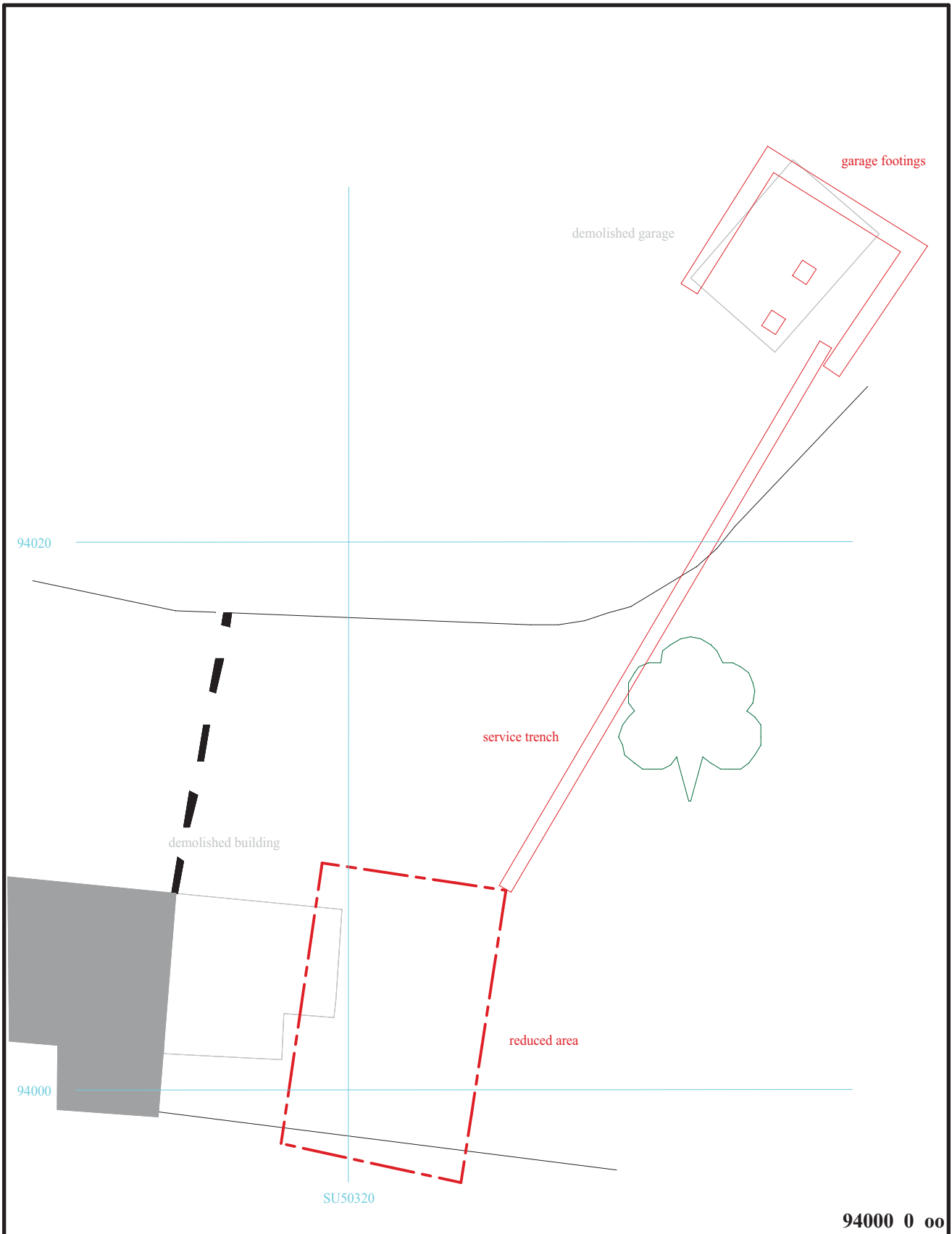
**1 Abbey Cottages, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.  
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:1250

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES





94000 0 00

**1 Abbey Cottages  
Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 3. Location of observed areas.

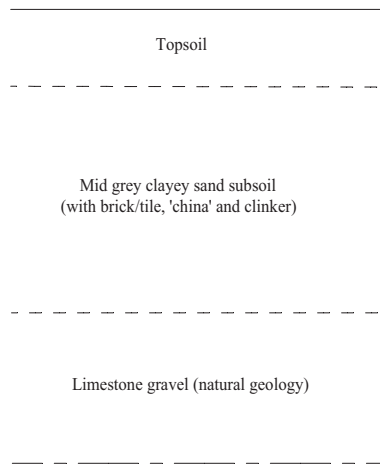


THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

**Reduced area section**

NNW

SSE



ACS 15/134

**1 Abbey Cottages, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire, 2015  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Representative section.





Plate 1. Reduced Area, looking northwest, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Garage footings, looking southeast, Scales: 1m.

ACS 15/134

**1 Abbey Cottage, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire, 2015**  
**Archaeological Watching Brief**

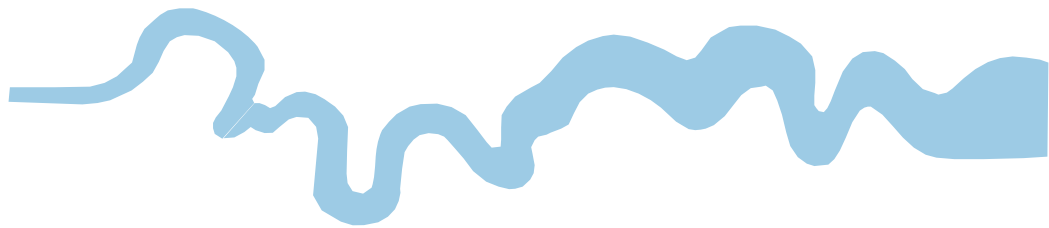
Plates 1 - 2.

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

## 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





**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)**