

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Hopkins Yard, Market Street,  
Charlbury, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Andrew Muddin**

**Site Code: HYC15/40**

**(SP 3564 1950)**

# **Hopkins Yard, Market Street, Charlbury, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr D. Maxwell**

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HYC 15/40

**May 2016**

## Summary

**Site name:** Hopkins Yard, Market Street, Charlbury, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SP 3564 1950

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 25th - 27th February 2015

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Muddin

**Site code:** HYC 15/40

**Area of site:** c. 240 sq m

**Summary of results:** Footing trenches were observed for retaining walls and a new building on a site to the rear of properties fronting Market Street. However, apart from made ground deposits of 19<sup>th</sup> century date, no finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were encountered.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 13.05.16 Steve Preston ✓ 13.05.16
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# Hopkins Yard, Market Street, Charlbury, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

**Report 15/40**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land at Hopkins Yard, Market Street, Charlbury, Oxfordshire (SP 3564 1950) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Damon Ball, of Westwaddy ADP LLP, The Malthouse, 60 East St Helens Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, Ox14 5EB, on behalf of Mr David Maxwell, 1 Westminster Palace Gardens, Artillery Row, London, SW1P 1RL.

Planning consent (14/1121/P/FP, superseding 13/0393/P/FP) has been gained from West Oxfordshire District Council for the conversion and extension of a barn to residential use with associated garage and garden areas. The consent was subject to two conditions (14 and 15) which required archaeological monitoring to be arranged and then undertaken during groundworks, in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Council's policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Joanne Robinson, former Assistant Archaeologist Officer for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, advisers to the District Council on matters pertaining to archaeology within the planning process. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin from 25th to 27th February 2015 and the site code is HYC 15/40.

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 within Charlbury, a market town in the eastern edge of the Cotswolds (Fig. 1), and is located to the rear of Market Street. Listed houses front the street to the east, and recent development lies immediately to the south and south east (Fig. 2). The site is at a height of 99m above Ordnance Datum (OD), and lies on Chipping Norton Formation Limestone, part of the Inferior Oolitic Group, with areas of clay, sandstone and limestone (BGS 1982). Limestone was recorded at the bases of excavation within this site.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief prepared by Ms Joanne Robinson formerly of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. In summary the site lies within the historic core of the town which has late Saxon origins and is documented in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002). It lies close to St Mary's Church which is thought to have been a late Saxon minster church with Saxon burial and a pre-12th century structure within the churchyard thought to relate to this (Munby et al 1975; Blair 1994,59) Roman burial is also known to exist outside the boundary of the existing churchyard.

The environs of the site is characterized by several Listed Buildings, with the site itself occupying a 'backlands' position for properties fronting Market Street. In post-medieval times, the site was a farm with a smithy though few of the original farm buildings survive. The site itself contains a barn of at least of 18th century date.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This would involve examination of all intrusive works that removed overburden during ground reduction and the digging of foundation trenches, retaining walls and drainage trenches. This would be carried out by a back-acting mechanical excavator, but due attention would be taken to the significance of each soil horizon, and the potential limit of where archaeological deposits could exist on the site. The barn was dismantled prior to archaeological site works commencing due to structural instability but was to be rebuilt using original stone with a deeper foundation.

## **Results**

The groundworks comprised three main components of archaeological interest; the building of two retaining walls and the digging of new foundations for the buildings

### *The eastern retaining wall*

This wall was constructed against the eastern side of the site adjacent to the properties of Chelwood and Griffin House (Fig. 3). The exposed section for the east retaining wall showed the full depth of stratigraphy on the site (Pl. 1) The comprised 0.15m of gravel overlay a layer of broken up limestone to a depth of 0.35m. This in turn

overlay 0.26m of made ground, an homogenous dark brown silty clay with modern tile, chinaware and clay pipe contained within its fill. This lay above natural limestone. The overall depth of the footing was 1.1m.

#### *The western retaining wall*

The western retaining wall was observed and revealed the same homogenous made ground layer to a depth of 0.7m (Pl. 2). This wall trench ran down the side of the access track to the south-western corner to the rear entrance of Minister Cottage which has recently been extended eastwards and included a detached garage. The northernmost part of the trench corresponded with a modern gas pipe. Natural limestone was uncovered in its base to a depth of 0.7m, but was not disturbed beyond 0.7m. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

#### *The foundation trenches*

The dismantling of the structures here have left minimal overburden in its original footprint. This was illustrated by a thin layer of made ground remaining over most of the area dug for the eastern footing. The footing trench stratigraphy was broadly similar to that observed in the eastern retaining wall trench with c. 0.3m of made ground overlying 0.26m of further made ground consisting of a dark brown silty clay with modern tile, chinaware and clay pipe. This layer thickened slightly towards the centre of the site. It lay above the limestone natural geology. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

### **Finds**

The made ground on the site contained white transfer-printed 'china' and post-medieval red earthenware pottery, clay tobacco pipe, and animal bone, all likely deposited in the late 19th century. No finds of medieval or earlier date were observed.

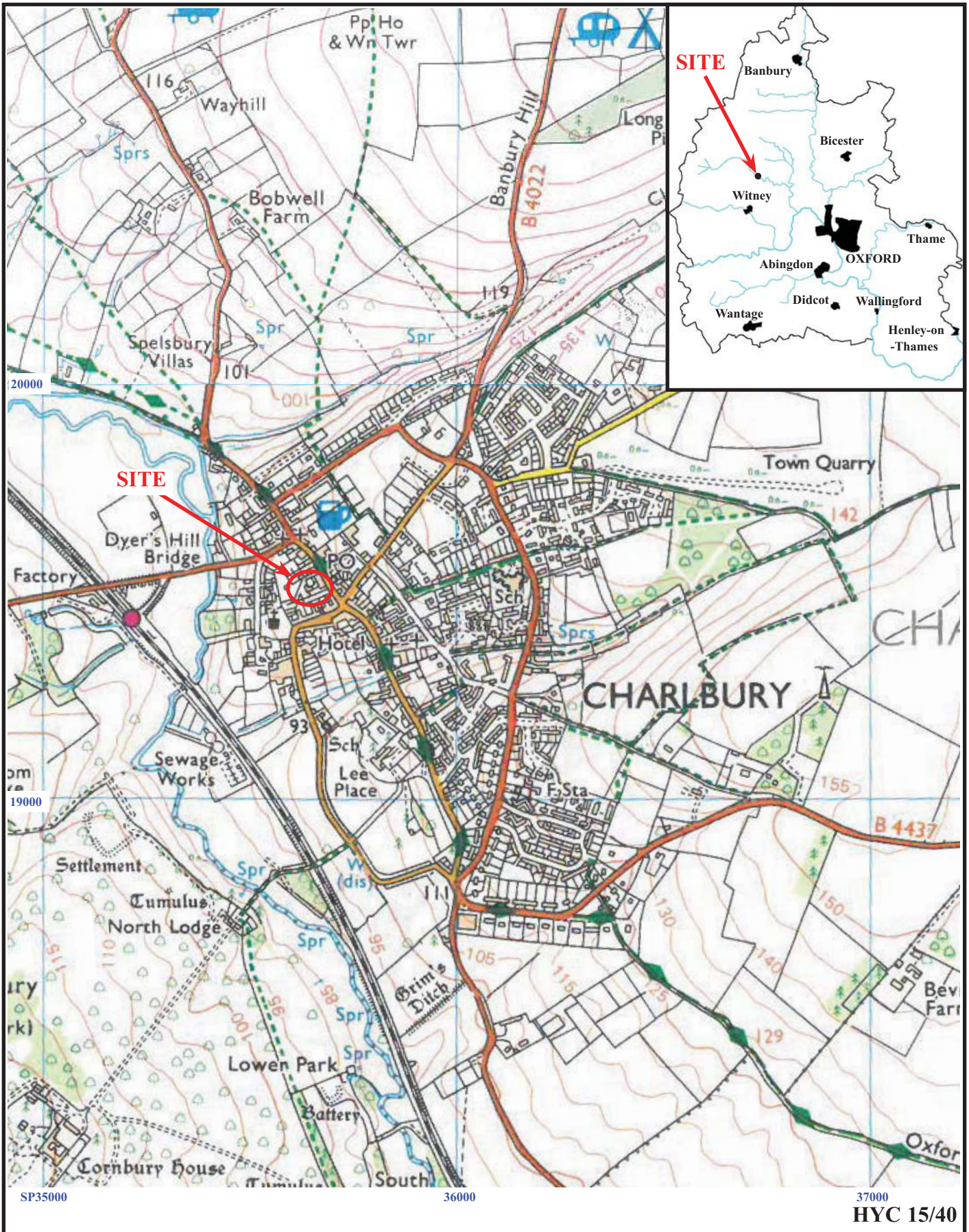
### **Conclusion**

No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered during the groundworks.

## References

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Blair, J, 1994, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, Stroud
- Munby, J, Rodwell, K and Turner H, 1975, 'Charlbury', in K Rodwell (ed), *Historic Towns in Oxfordshire: a survey of the new County*, Oxford Archaeol Unit Survey No 3, Oxford, 76–784
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Robinson, J, 2015, 'Hopkins Yard, Market Street, Charlbury, Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, Oxford





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Figure 1. Location of site within Charlbury and Oxfordshire

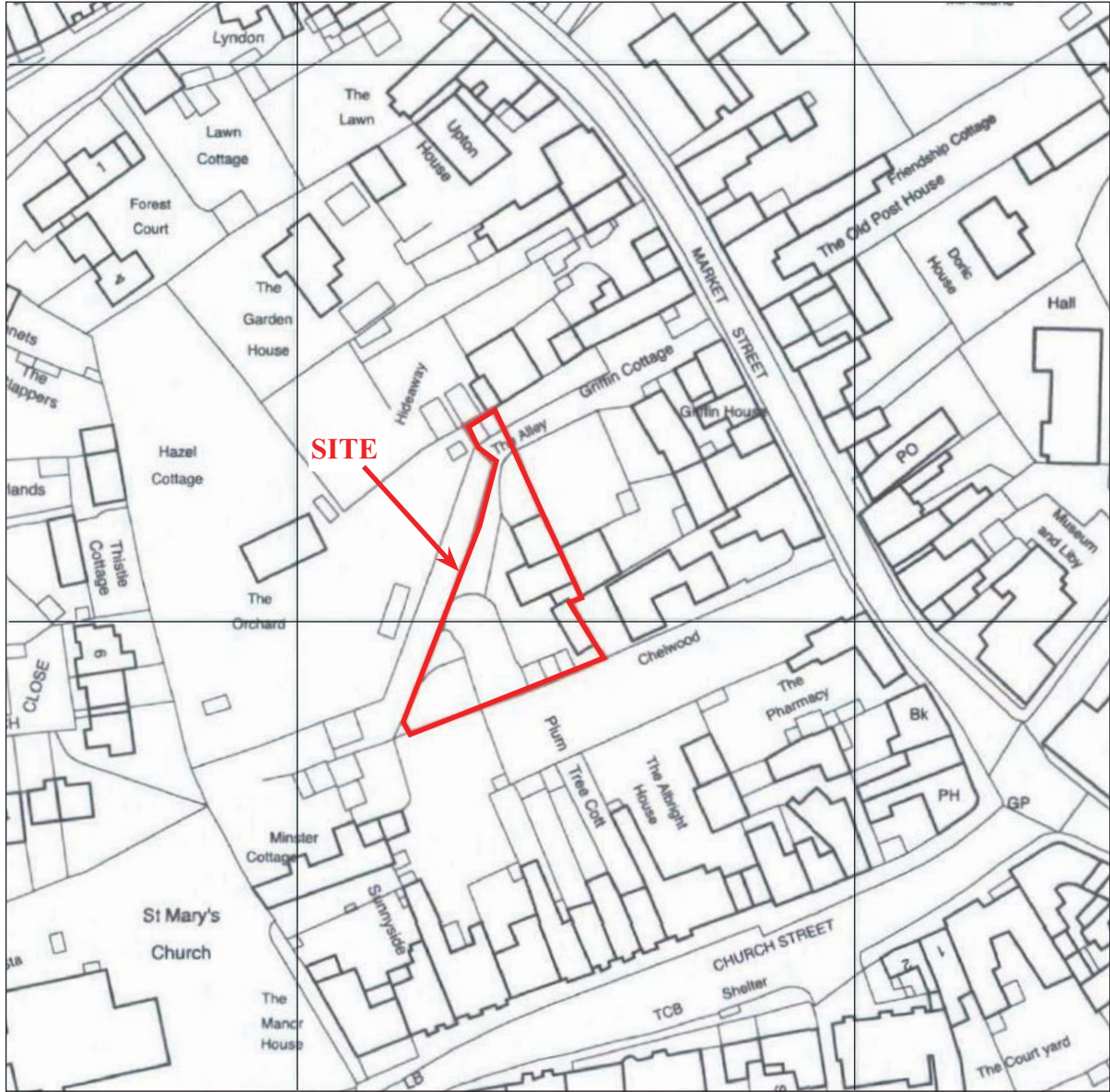
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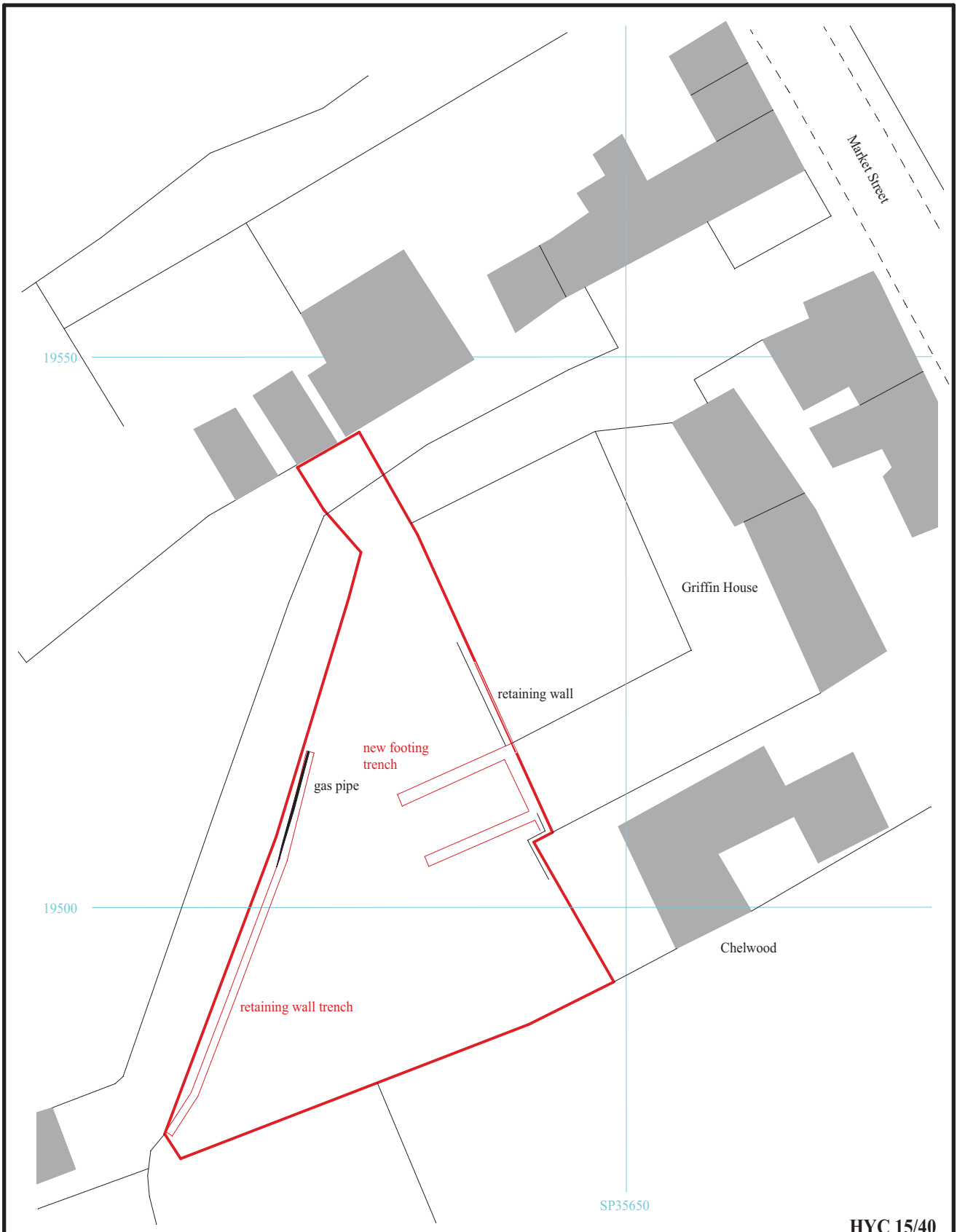


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Market Street.

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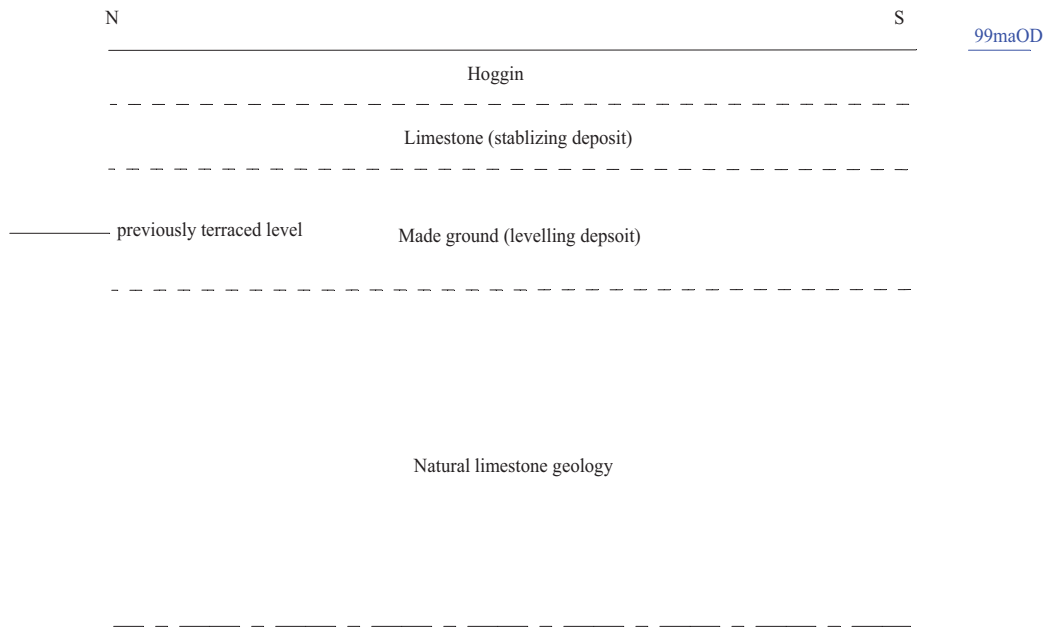
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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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**Eastern retaining wall section**



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Figure 4. Representative section.





Plate 1. General view of site, looking east.



Plate 2. Section of eastern footing trench, Scale: 1m.



Plate 3. Retaining wall trench looking north.



Plate 4. Retaining wall trench section, looking north east, Scale: 1m

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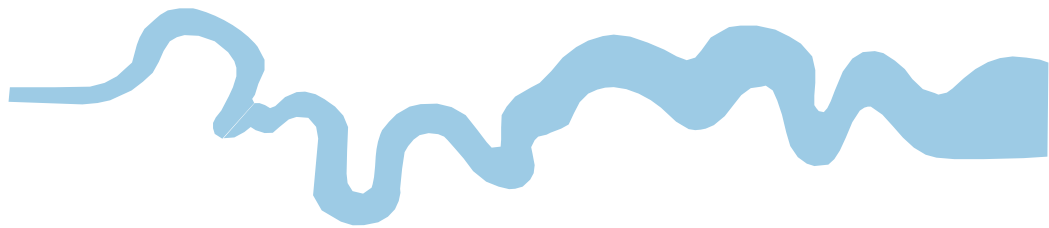
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Plates 1-4

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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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