

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**St Mary's Church, White Waltham,
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: SMW06/28

(SU 8551 7749)

St Mary's Church, White Waltham, Maidenhead, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For White Waltham and Shottesbrook Parochial Church Council

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SMW 06/28

May 2016

Summary

Site name: St Mary's Church, White Waltham, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8551 7749

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 20th November 2014 - 7th October 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: SMW 06/28

Summary of results: A total of 56 graves were identified during the work of which 19 were excavated and lifted due to be threatened by further groundworks

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate 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 All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: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✓ 20.05.16
	Steve Preston✓ 20.05.16

St Mary's Church, White Waltham, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 06/28b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at St Mary's Church, White Waltham (SU 8551 7749) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Neil Barr of DLK Architects, Chiltern Chambers, St Peter's Avenue, Caversham, RG4 7DH on behalf of White Waltham and Shottesbrook Parochial Church Council.

Planning consent (04/41948) has been granted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new Sunday school at the Church. A faculty (6107) has been gained from the Diocese of Oxford relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks. This was to take place during groundworks as a result of the possibility of damage or destruction of archaeological deposits.

This in accordance with principles detailed in the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16, 1990), to inform both the planning process and the Diocesan Advisory Committee. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury, Danielle Milbank, Rebecca Constable, Sophie Frampton, Thomas Stewart, Dan Strachan and Benedikt Tebbit between 20th November 2014 and 7th October 2015 and the site code is SMW 06/28.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the churchyard of St Mary's Church in White Waltham which lies between Twyford and Maidenhead in Berkshire (Figs 2 and 3). The exact location of the development lies on the southern side of the church in an area of open, flat ground with a small number of trees in the church yard. The natural geology, according to the British Geological Survey, is Reading Beds but with the junction with the upper chalk just to the north (BGS 1981) and lies at 34.0m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site is derived from its location within the historic centre of White Waltham which has medieval origins but is not documented in Domesday Book. There are Saxon land charters for the area, the earlier (c. AD940) refers to 'Waltham' which suggests St Lawrence, White Waltham and Shottesbrooke were not yet separate (although possibly it refers to Waltham in Essex) whereas a later one of AD1007 refers specifically to Waltham St Lawrence suggesting the separate parishes had been created by this time. The site lies within the graveyard of the church which has at least medieval origins (Ford 1987). The church contains some features of 11th- to 13th-century date. The parish church usually lies at the historic centre of the settlement and there is a possibility of encountering occupation deposits in such a location. There are also features relating to the nearby manor house in the vicinity, such as an extant icehouse (A. Hill, pers. comm.). Given the age of the church it is likely that there are unmarked graves within the area relating to the planning application and Church records reveal that the proposed development area lies on a parcel of land given to the church during the 19th century. Previous trial trenching revealed the presence of four grave cuts in the central area of the development (Cass 2006 and Fig. 4).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks. The new building was to be constructed with piled foundations which both minimize the impact on buried archaeological deposits and limit the opportunity to observe the archaeologically relevant levels. There was, however, a need for some ground reduction on other components (namely the access road) and there was the possibility of the digging of deep service runs.

Archaeological deposits which were threatened by groundworks were to be excavated and recorded. Any human remains which are of post-medieval or modern date were to be summarily recorded but not otherwise archaeologically excavated. The bone remains will not be retained but will be returned to the church for re-interment. Any human remains of Medieval or earlier date were to be archaeologically recorded and excavated as necessary.

Results

Piling

A start on the groundworks took place in 2009 (much earlier years) than the main groundworks described below. An area c. 9m x 5m was stripped of topsoil which was c. 0-0.16m thick to reveal a light brown chalky clay subsoil. At least two grave cuts were observed but were not investigated or disturbed further. Four piles were inserted from the stripped surface which were 0.3m in diameter.

Ground Reduction

Ground reduction took place across the area of the new build using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, down to depths of up to 1.20m (depending on build up across the area) through deposits of topsoil (68), re-deposited clay (69), chalk (70), brown silt (71), grey brown silt subsoil (72) and natural clays.

A total of 56 grave cuts were uncovered of which 20 were identified as being at risk from further groundworks, but as they were most likely of post-medieval date, they did not have significant osteological research potential. The human remains were examined on site and where possible, age, sex, completeness, state of preservation and pathology were recorded as a minimum (details in Appendix 1). The remains were not retained but returned to the church for re-interment. The procedures and guidelines outlined in Brickley and McKinley (2004) and English Heritage (2004; 2005) were applied as necessary.

Skeletons

No grave cuts were observed in the overburden as the ground was highly homogenized, most likely due to the repeated episodes of burial. However, grave cuts could be seen upon reaching the natural geology, at the north-eastern end of the strip a number of possible graves were visible however upon investigation they were found to be the base of graves and no bones were found suggesting that these graves may have been previously disturbed. There was no obvious sequence of burials and no graves were found to overlie earlier graves as is often found in churchyards. The graves varied in depth from 0.20m to 1.00m+ and this would suggest that the shallow depth at which the remains were found suggests that they pre-date the Burial Act of 1857, assuming this was rigorously enforced from the outset. There is, however, no way to establish closer dating than between the 12th century and the mid-late 19th centuries. A number of the graves showed evidence of been disturbed by tree roots, a large tree had existed in the central area of the strip and the roots of this could easily have disturbed the graves in the area.

The burials were all found on an alignment broadly of south west-north east with the skulls uniformly at the western end of the graves. This alignment, parallel to the churchyard boundary, rather than parallel to the church or strictly west–east suggests a relatively recent date for all these graves, in line with the date of transfer of this piece of land to the church in the 19th century.

In general a large proportion of the graves excavated were found to contain poorly preserved skeletons, as mentioned earlier this is possibly due to root disturbance as seen in Grave [5]. In total 3 were male and one possibly female and the remainder could not be sexed due to the poor preservation. A total of 2 infants (0-1 year old) were found, 7 children (1-14 years old), 7 adolescents (15-20 years old), 1 adult (20+ years old) and 2 were not able to be aged. Based on the sizes of the remaining unexcavated graves it is likely that they too were either child or adolescent burials.

Finds

As per the written scheme of investigation all finds were retained on site. Sherds of medieval pottery were recorded from the subsoil, and buttons were found in one grave, a number of graves contained iron nail fittings which are probably the remains of coffins. The coffins that were found were heavily rotten and fragments of metal were found around them in the form of handles and in the case of grave [6] the remains of a plaque however it was not possible to identify the occupant. All bones were returned to the church for reburial.

Conclusion

The watching brief has revealed the presence of 56 graves in an area previously known (from church records) to contain only a small number of graves. The graves are believed to be post-medieval or later based on the presence of coffins in a number of the graves and buttons found in the graves and the fact that the area in which the new building is to be built was recorded as been given to the church in the nineteenth century.

References

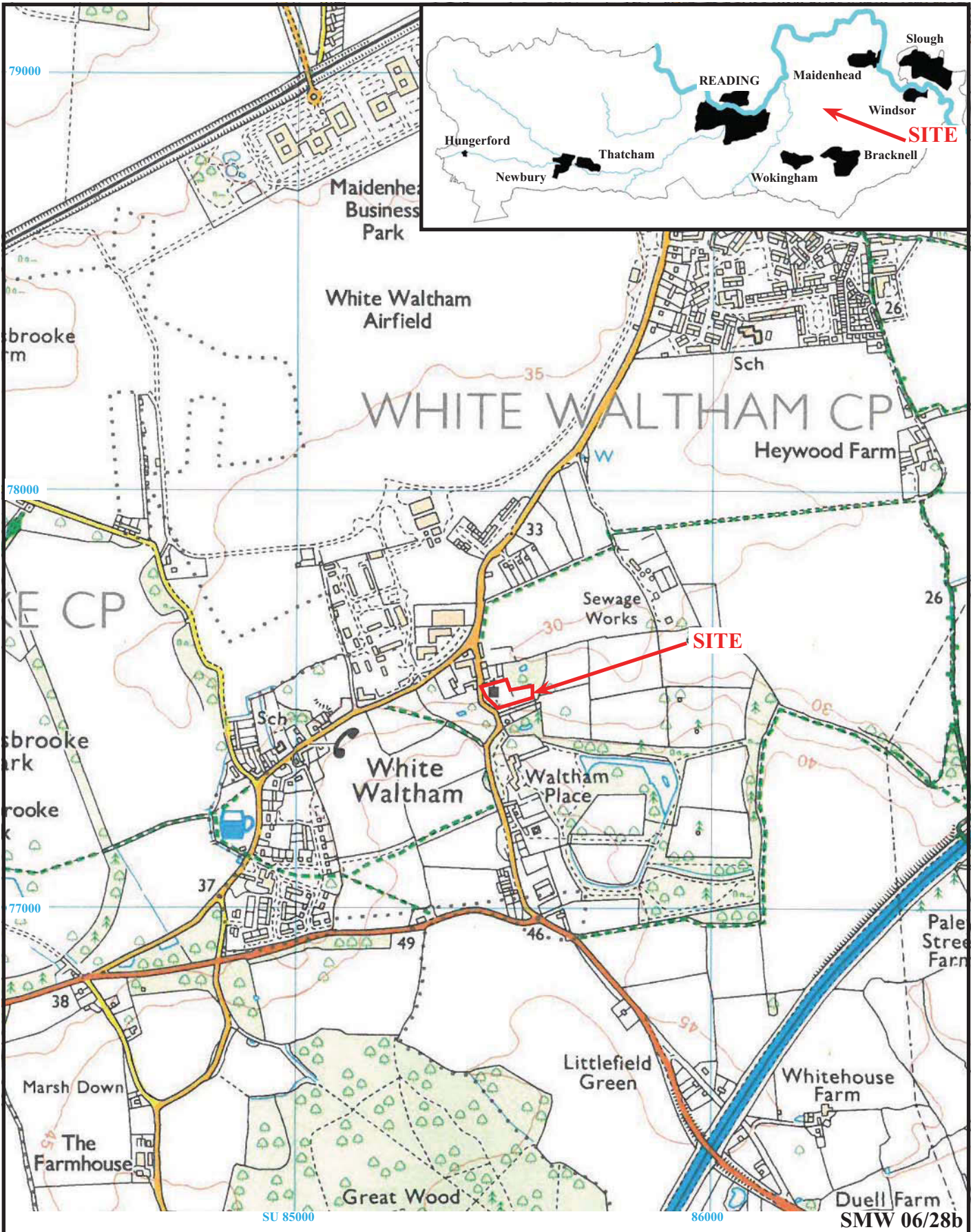
- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Brickley, M and McKinley, J (eds), 2004, *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*, IFA Pap 7
- Cass, S, 2006, New Sunday School, St Mary's Church, White Waltham, Maidenhead, Berkshire, *An Archaeological Evaluation*, Thames Valley Archaeological Services 06/28
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- English Heritage, 2004, *Human Bones from Archaeological Sites: guidelines for producing assessment documents and analytical reports*, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines, Swindon
- English Heritage, 2005, *Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*, Swindon
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Feature details

Age categories: Neonate = around the time of birth; Infant = 0 – 1 year; Child = 1 – 14 years; Adolescent = 15 – 20 years

Adult = 20+ years (only old adults could be differentiated due to tooth wear or vertebral osteoarthritis)

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Preservation</i>	<i>Completeness</i>	<i>Age category</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	52	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated, evaluation
2	53	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated, evaluation
3	54	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated, evaluation
4	55	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated, evaluation
5	58, SK59	Skeleton	Poor	< 25%	Child	n/a	Highly fragmented
6	60, SK61	Skeleton	Poor	< 25%	Child	n/a	Highly fragmented
7	62, SK63	Skeleton	Poor	25 - 50%	Child	n/a	
8	65, SK64	Skeleton	Poor	25%	Child	n.a	Arms and legs only
9	67, SK66	Skeleton	Fair	75%	Child	n/a	
10	80, SK79	Skeleton	Good	75%+	Adolescent	M?	
11	164	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
12	90, 92, SK91	Skeleton	Good	75%+	Adolescent	F?	
13	82, SK81	Skeleton	Good	75%+	Adolescent	M?	
14	99, 151, SK150	Skeleton	Good	25%	n/a	n/a	Only legs exposed
15	83, 85, SK84	Skeleton	Fair	70%	Adolescent	M?	
16	167	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
17	73, 75, SK74	Skeleton	poor	< 25%	Infant	n/a	
18	76, 78, SK77	Skeleton	poor	< 25%	adolescent	n/a	
19	86, SK87	Skeleton	poor	< 25 %	Infant	n/a	
20	89, SK88	Skeleton	Poor	< 25 %	Adolescent	n/a	
21	93, SK94	Skeleton	fair	50 - 75%	Child	n/a	
22	95, SK96	Skeleton					Unexcavated
23	97, SK98	Skeleton	poor	< 25 %	Child	n/a	
24	152, 154, SK153	Skeleton	fair	75 %	Adult	n/a	
25	155, 156	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
26	157, 159, SK158	Skeleton	poor	< 25 %	n/a	n/a	
27	160, SK161	Skeleton	fair	75% +	adolescent	n/a	
28	168	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No skeleton
29	162, 163	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
30	164	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
31	165	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
32	166	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
33	167	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
34	168	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
35	169	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
36	170	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
37	171	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
38	172	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
39	173	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
40	174	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
41	175	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
42	176	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
43	177	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
44	178	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
45	179	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
46	180	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
47	181	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
48	182	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
49	183	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
100	184	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
101	185	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
102	186	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
103	187	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
104	188	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
105	189	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated
106	190	Grave	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Unexcavated



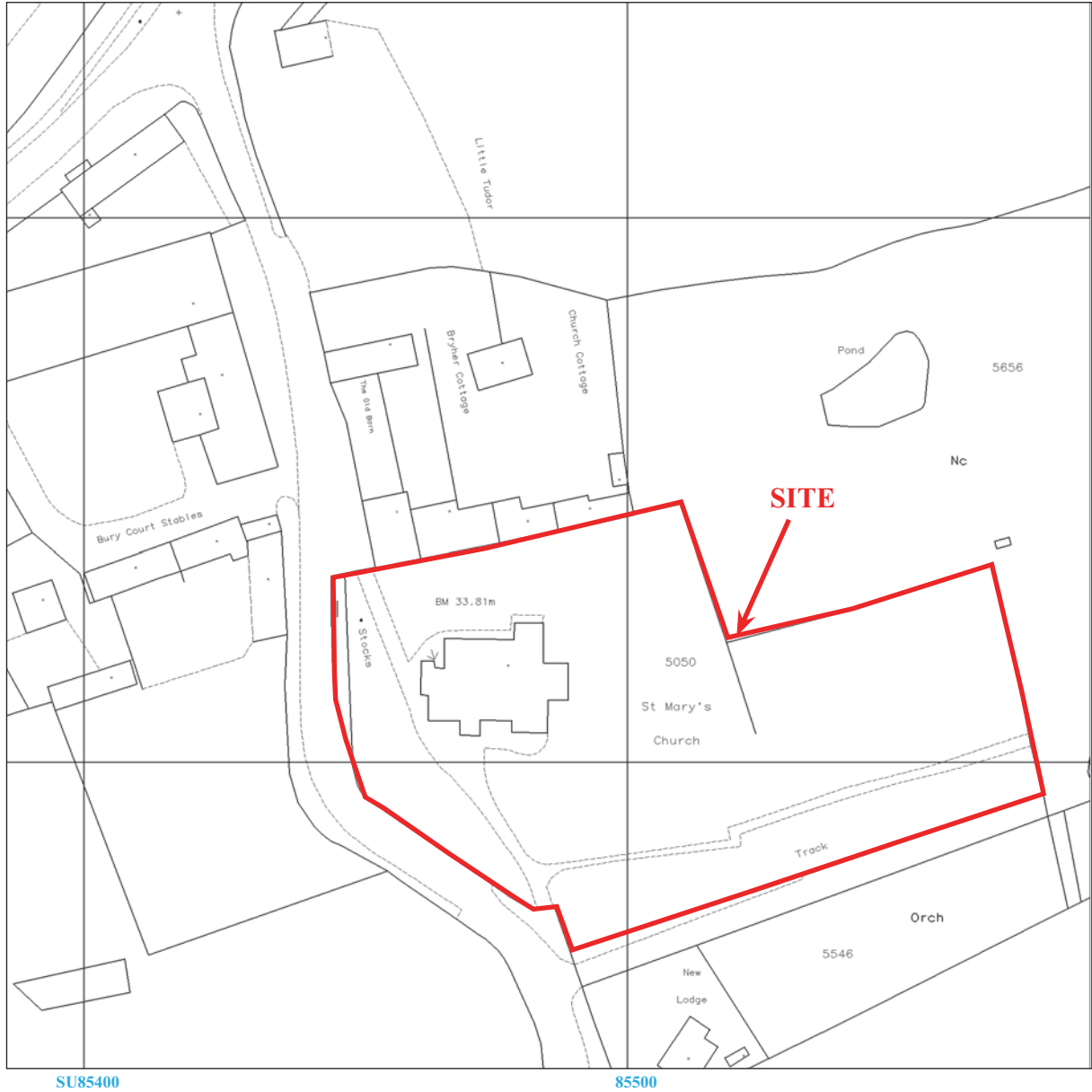
**St Mary's Church, White Waltham,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within White Waltham and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 160 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

SMW 06/28b



SMW 06/28b

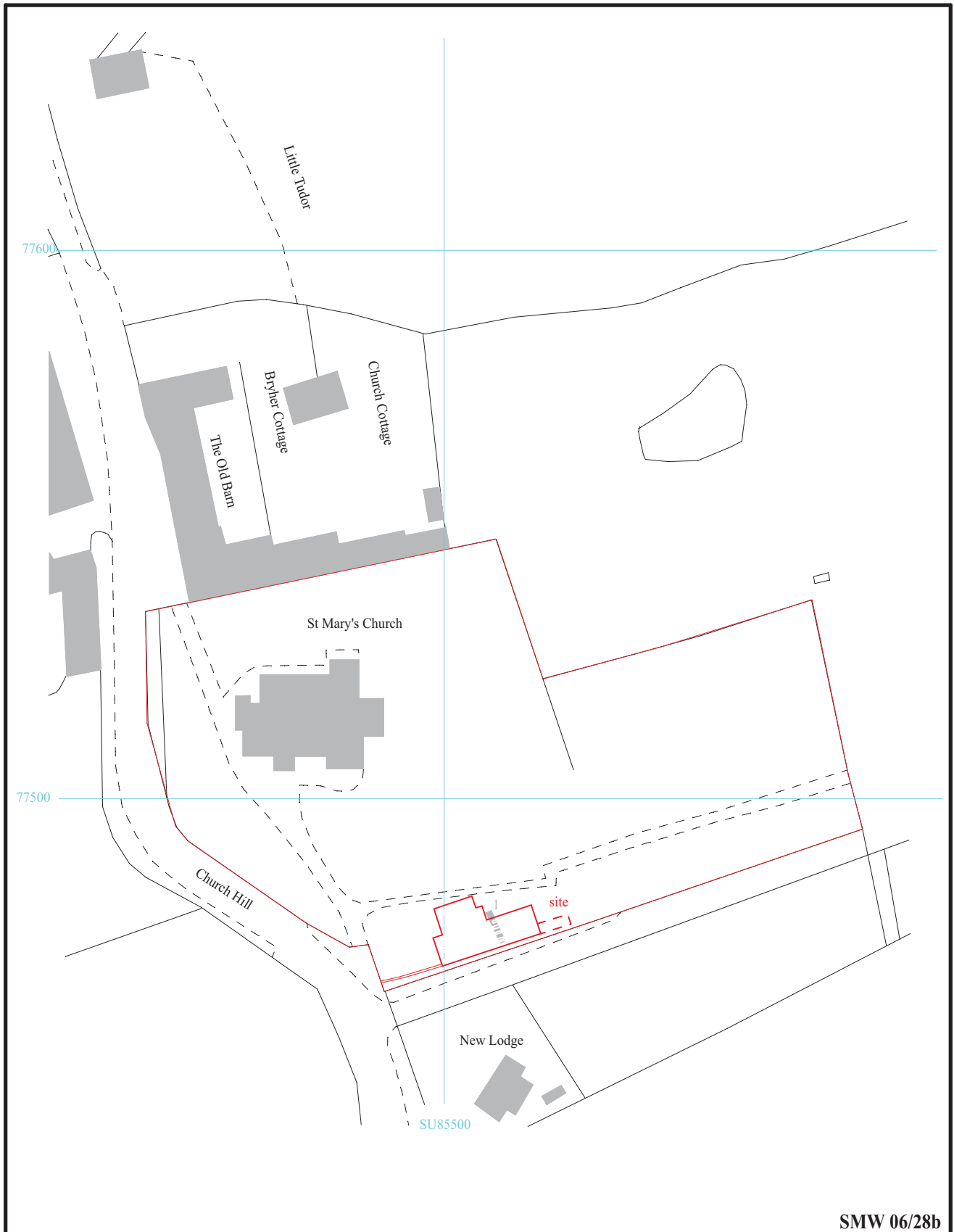


**St Mary's Church, White Waltham,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Church Hill.

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

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



SMW 06/28b



**Saint Mary's Church, White Waltham,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Areas of Investigation

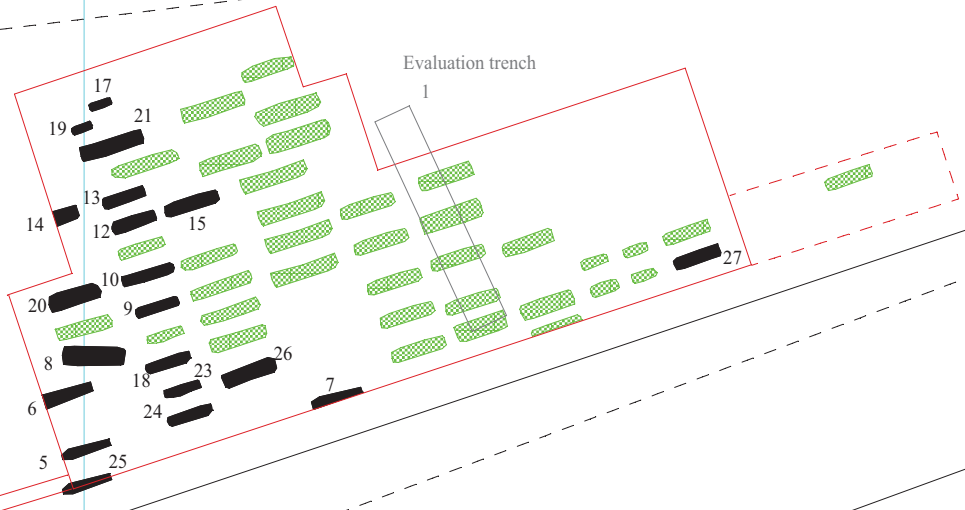


THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

77500

77410

SU85500



- Grave excavated and bones lifted due to threat from further groundworks
- Grave not under threat from further groundworks

SMW 06/28b



**St Mary's Church, White Waltham,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Detailed plan of site showing graves located.



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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S



Plate 1. Grave [12] Sk91, looking SW, Scales: 1m and 0.3m and 0.1m.



Plate 2. Graves [11], [12] and [13], looking SW, Scales: 0.5m, 0.5m and 0.2m.

SMW 06/28b

**St Mary's Church, White Waltham,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 1 - 2.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Grave [7], looking SW, Scales: 1m and 0.2m.



Plate 4. Grave 10, SK79, looking SW, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

SMW 06/28b

**St Mary's Church, White Waltham,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2015
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 3 - 4.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 5. Grave [21] SK 94, looking SW, Scales: 1m, 0.5m and 0.1m.



Plate 6. General shot of site showing graves, looking NE

SMW 06/28b

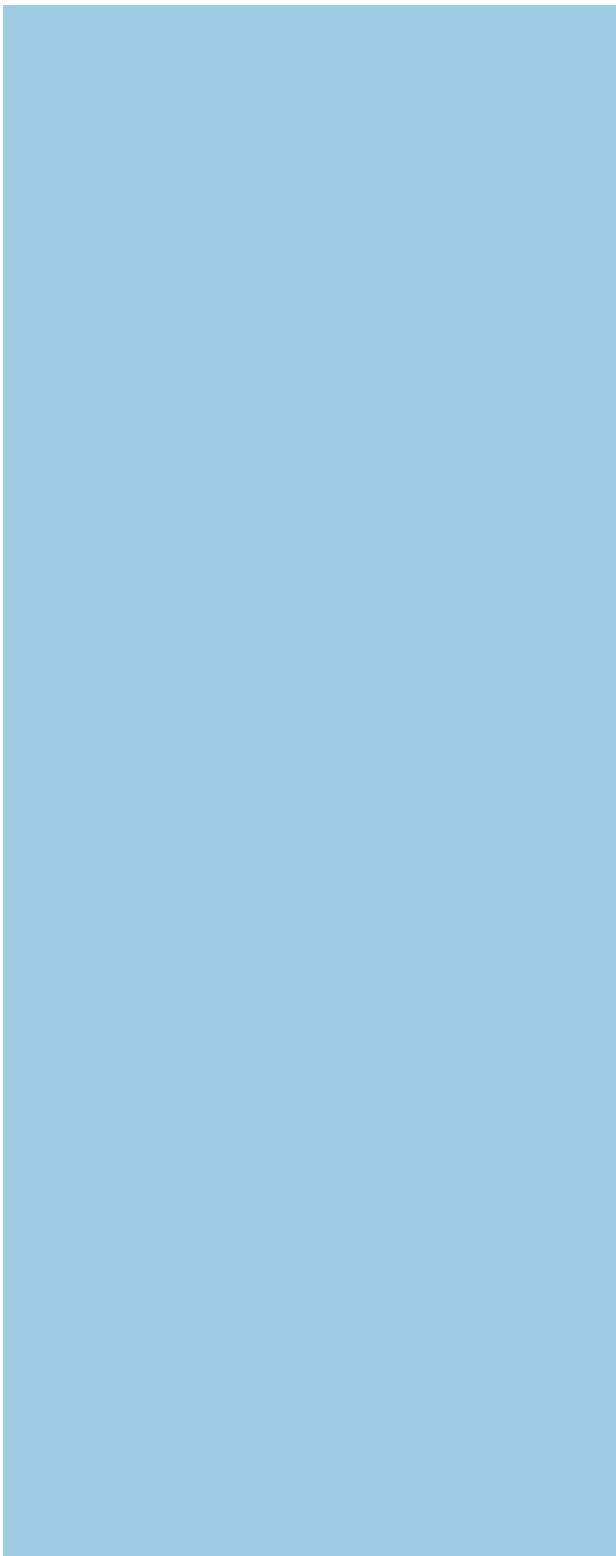
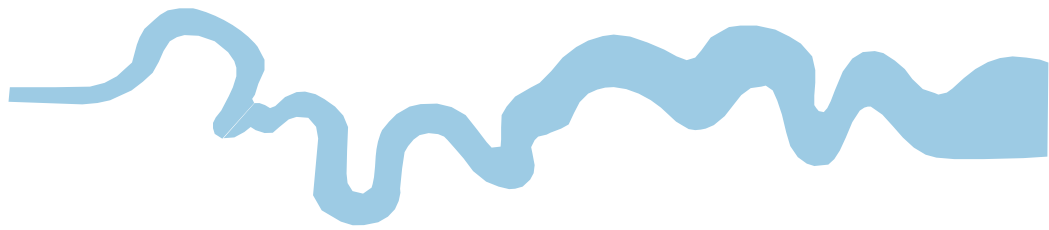
**St Mary's Church, White Waltham,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2015
Arcaheological Watching Brief
Plates 5 - 6.**

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**