

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**The Maltings, Hart Street,  
Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Lizzi Lewins**

**Site Code: TMH15/169**

**(SU 7616 8261)**

# **The Maltings, Hart Street, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Hart St Maltings Ltd**

by Lizzi Lewins

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code TMH 15/169b

**May 2016**

## Summary

**Site name:** The Maltings, Hart Street, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 76156 82609

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 19th - 25th August 2015

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Tim Dawson and Andrew Muddin

**Site code:** TMH 15/169

**Summary of results:** A likely Post-Medieval wall was uncovered during the course of the watching brief, which possibly represents the original extent of the building. No archaeological features or finds pre-dating the wall were uncovered.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museums Service in due course, with accession code OXCMS:2015.248.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 23.05.16 Steve Preston ✓ 23.05.16
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# **The Maltings, Hart Street, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Lizzi Lewins

**Report 15/169b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at The Maltings, Hart Street, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire (SU 76156 82609) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Davey of Robert Rigby Architects Ltd, 42 Portman Road, Reading, RG30 1EA on behalf of Hart St Maltings Ltd.

Planning permission (P14/S2187/FUL), has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council to convert the existing building into two, three-bedroom dwellings. The work is subject to conditions (7 & 8), which require an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during the groundworks due to the possibility of disturbance of below ground archaeological features. A second application (P141S1401/LB) has been granted to convert the building into retail and office space, which required a building recording take place, the results of which can be found in TMH 15/169a (Elliott 2015). This report documents the results of the archaeological watching brief.

This is 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 Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist with Oxfordshire County Council, the archaeological adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson and Andrew Muddin between the 19th and 25th August 2015 and the site code is TMH 15/169b.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museums Service in due course, with accession code OXCMS:2015.248.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The Maltings is located on the south side of Hart Street, to the rear of number 18, within the town centre of Henley-on-Thames (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 35m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as the Younger Coombe Deposits (BGS 1980).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential stems from the site's location within the centre of Henley on Thames and on the site of a former Malt House. The malthouse itself is believed to date from the 18th century. Alterations to the floor

level have the potential to reveal earlier floor surfaces related to the malthouse as well as earlier archaeological remains. A medieval pit and undated pits and ditches were found during a watching brief at 35 Hart Street. A number of previous watching briefs have taken place within the immediate area of The Maltings. Two of the watching briefs recorded no features or finds (Hull 1999; Lowe 2004), whilst three recorded only Post-Medieval and Modern material (Mundin 2010; 2014a; 2014b). The investigation at Old Bell House produced a small amount of late Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery although no features were recorded (Taylor 2014).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved the monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and included the observation of surface stripping, the excavation of foundations and service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work as necessary. All excavation and ground reduction was to be supervised by an archaeologist and all spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds.

## **Results**

### Test Pits

Four test pits were dug before the ground reduction commenced within the building and were excavated by a mini digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 3: 1-4).

Test pit 1 was 1.2sq m and excavated to a depth of 0.45m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of brick and stone overburden overlying 0.3m of brown sandy gravel. No archaeology was observed.

Test pit 2 was 1.2sq m and excavated to a depth of 0.4m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.29m of brick and stone overburden overlying 0.11m of reddish brown silty clay. No archaeology was observed.

Test pit 3 was 1.2sq m and excavated to a depth of 0.48m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of brick and stone overburden overlying 0.38m of dark brown clayey silt which contained fragments of brick and animal bone. No finds were retained and no archaeological features were observed.

Test pit 4 was 1.2sq m and excavated to a depth of 0.46m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m or brick and stone overburden overlying 0.36m of dark brown clayey silt. A brick and flint core wall (50) and a bedding layer of chalk blocks/rubble (51) were recorded in the pit and noted to extend across the width of the building. The wall was seen at a depth of 0.16m and was 0.38m - 0.48m wide and 0.32m deep. The bricks were 220mm x 73mm x 110mm. The chalk layer was 0.14m deep and seen to a depth of 0.46m. The chalk blocks were 100mm x 50mm x 230mm. It was recorded that the upper surface of the wall appeared to have been cut of to the lower edge of the existing floor (Pls 2 and 3).

#### Ground Reduction (Pl 1)

Ground reduction took place at the southern end of the building. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of concrete floor overlying 0.31m of a mixed brown black sandy silt with frequent gravel, brick, tile and concrete rubble inclusions overlying 0.13m of brown black sandy silt with infrequent gravel inclusions and modern china. The latter layer was interpreted as a possible buried topsoil. The natural geology was not revealed.

Pillars were removed as part of the works. A small cluster of oyster shell and animal bone was observed near the third pillar (Fig. 3 p3) but was not retained, no defined cut was observed. The footings of the interior southern wall were exposed and showed the same chalk bedding layer as seen in test pit 4.

#### **Finds**

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

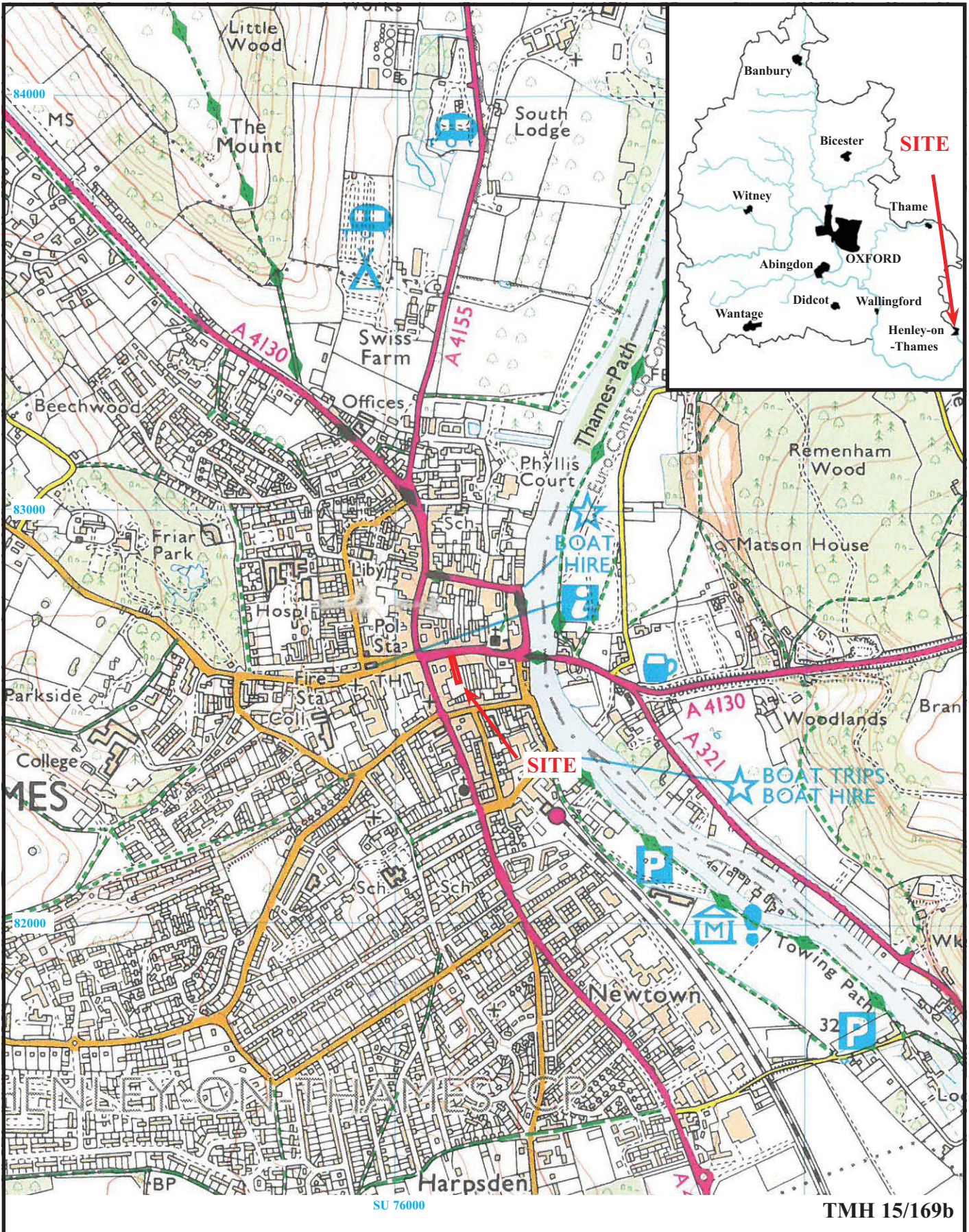
#### **Conclusion**

The watching brief uncovered the remains of a likely post-medieval wall which was seen across the width of the existing building. The wall possibly represents the original extent of the building which was later demolished to allow for an extension to be constructed. No archaeological features or finds pre-dating the wall were uncovered.

## References

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
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- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Taylor, A, 2014, 'Old Bell House, 9 Northfield End, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, An Archaeological Watching Brief', TVAS rep **14/170**, Reading





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Figure 1. Location of site within Henley on Thames and Oxfordshire

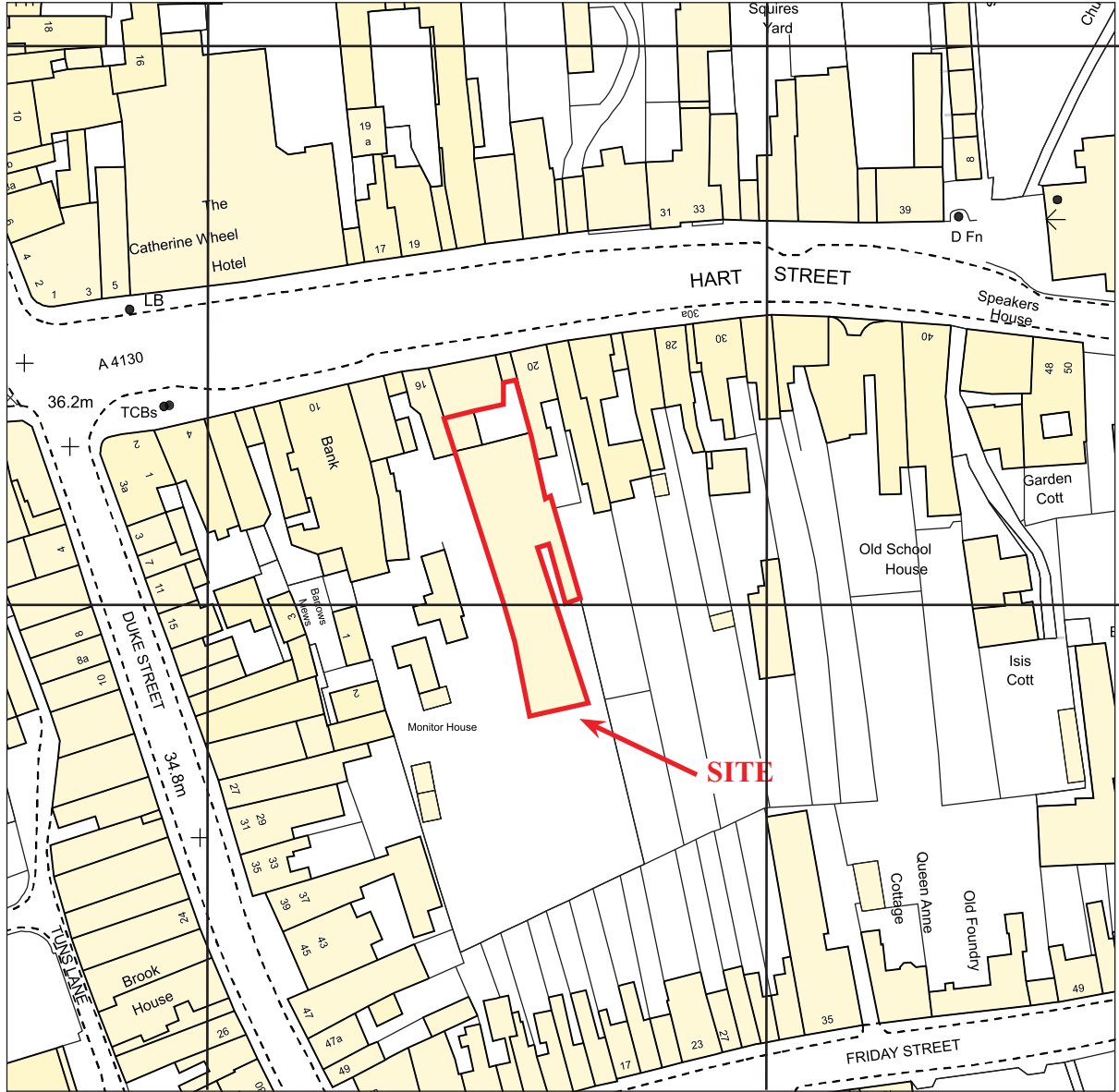
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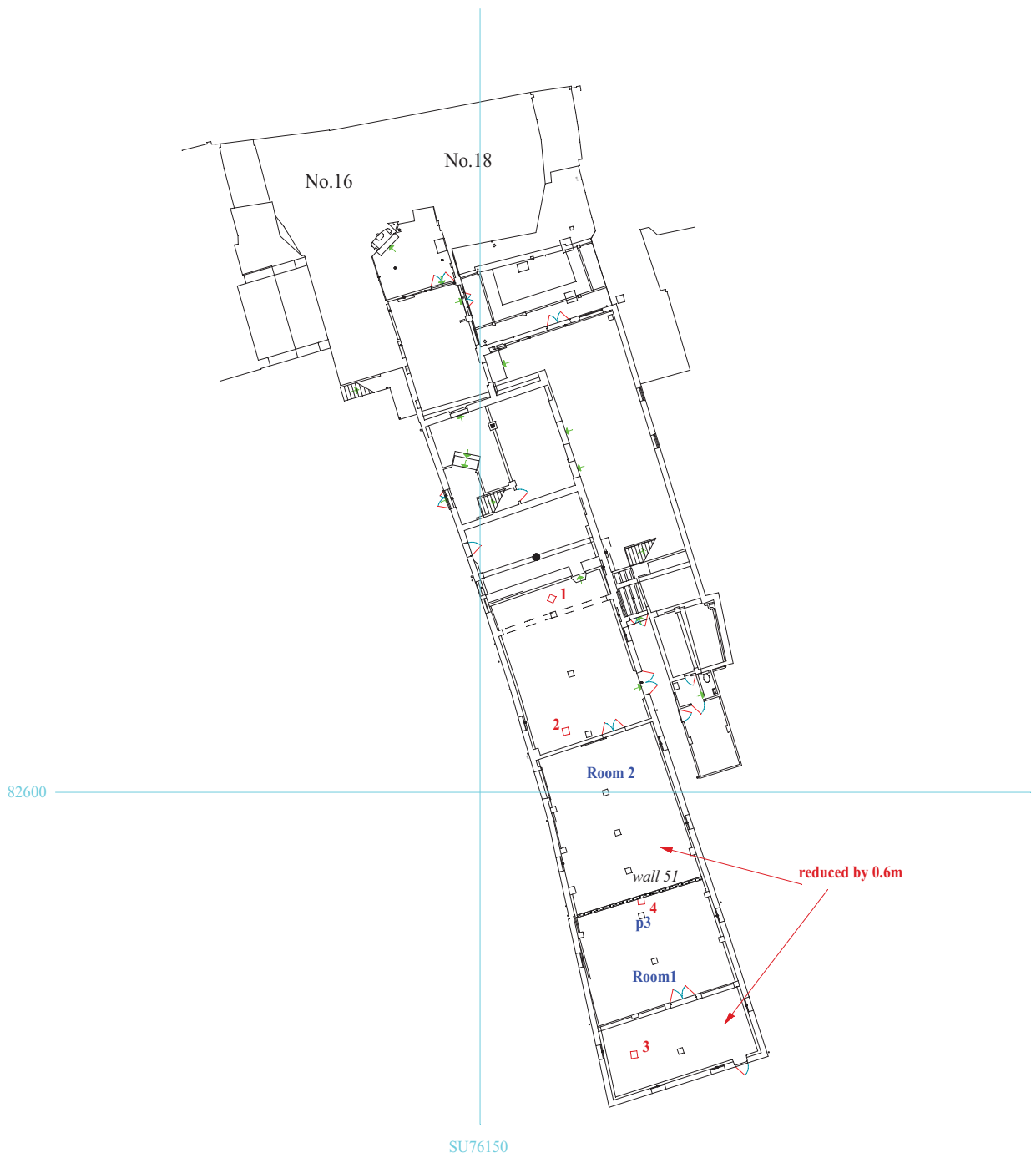


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Hart Street.

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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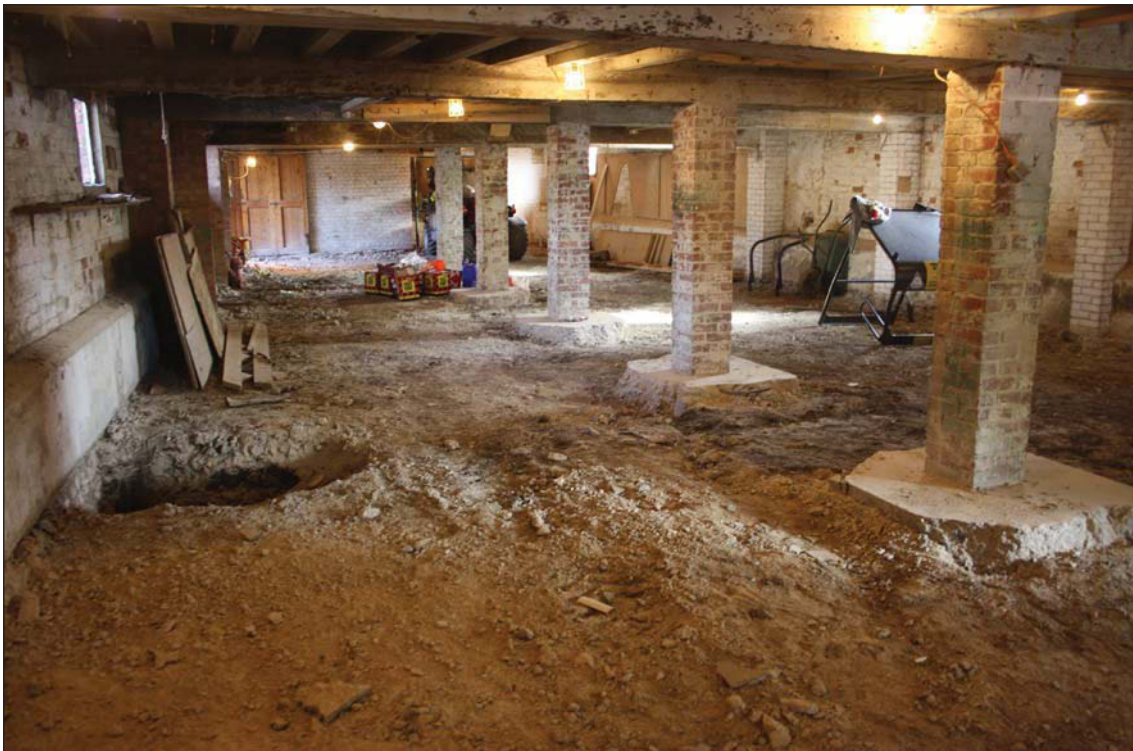


Plate 1. Southern range after concrete slab removed and before reduction, looking north.



Plate 2. Wall 51 exposed, looking east, Scale: 1m.



Plate 3. Wall 51, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.

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Plates 1 - 3.

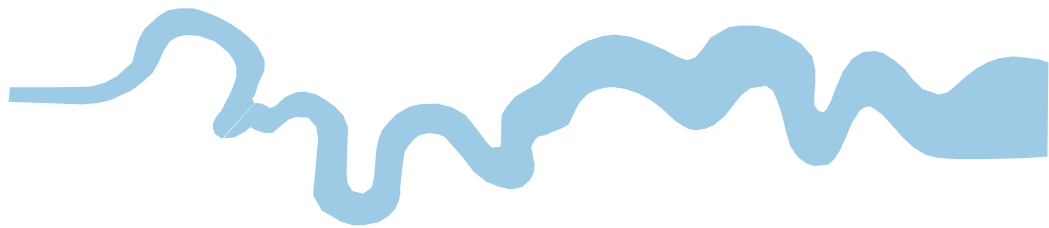
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## TIME CHART

	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







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