

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**6-8 Park Town, Oxford,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Luis Esteves

Site Code: PTO15/168

(SU 7810 7380)

6-8 Park Town, Oxford, Oxfordshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Oxford Architects**

by Luis Esteves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PTO 15/168

July 2016

Summary

Site name: 6-8 Park Town, Oxford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 5118 0775

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 6th to 30th June 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Luis Esteves and Ellen McManus-Fry

Site code: PTO 15/168

Area of site: c. 40 sq m

Summary of results: No finds or deposits of archaeological interest were discovered during the course of the fieldwork.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 21.07.16 Steve Preston ✓ 19.07.16

6-8 Park Town, Oxford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Luis Esteves

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Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 6-8 Park Town, Oxford, Oxfordshire (SP 5118 0775) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Dan Boucher of Oxford Architects, Bagley Croft, Hinksey Hill, Oxford, OX1 5BS.

Planning permission (14/00812/FUL) has been granted from Oxford City Council for the refurbishment and extension of a Grade II Listed house at 6-8 Park Town, Oxford. The consent is subject to a condition (13) relating to archaeology which require a watching brief to be carried out during the groundworks. A second consent was also subject to a condition, which required a building recording, which has been reported separately (Elliott 2015).

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the City's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, Oxford City Council Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by Luis Esteves and Ellen McManus-Fry, from 6th to 30th June 2016 and the site code is PTO 15/168.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at 6-8 Park Town, Oxford, next to Banbury Road in the north area of the city (Fig. 1). The geology is mapped as 2nd (Summertown-Radley) Terrace Deposits of River Gravels (BGS 1982) and this was observed during the watching brief. The site lies at a height of between c.60m and c.65m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

In summary, the archaeological potential the site stems from its position within the suburbs just to the north of the historic (Saxon/Medieval core of Oxford (Ashdown and Hassall 1975; Dodd 2003) and in the narrow strip of

land between the rivers Thames and Cherwell. Fieldwork in this area has revealed several sites of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman date with for example cropmark evidence of Bronze Age ring ditches (levelled round barrows) on The University Parks not far to the south (Hassall, 1986, fig 12). Recent excavations at St Giles and at the Radcliffe Infirmary have revealed a Late Neolithic henge monument and further ring ditches suggesting that this area of North Oxford was a rich earlier prehistoric landscape (Wallis 2014; Braybrook 2011). Park Town was designed and laid out as a whole and is a conservation area: the background to that development is given in the building recording report (Elliott 2015).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved the archaeological monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any ground reduction, the digging of foundation and service trenches. All excavation was done by a 360-type machine under constant archaeological supervision.

Results

Groundworks occurred in two areas (Fig. 3). One was inside the house for a new level floor, where the concrete foundations reached the depth of 3.85m and the stratigraphy observed was a little modern cut of silty sand (0.80m deep) probably from the existing house construction, cut into a subsoil of yellow sand gravel (0.90m deep) over a mid yellow silt clay natural geology (Fig. 4; Pl. 1).

The other area of groundworks was outside the house for a new extension. This area was reduced to a depth of 4m and the stratigraphy observed was a sandy gravel (1.7m deep), overlying a light yellow silty clay (1.3m deep) and a mid yellow brown silty clay with some gravel (natural geology) (Pls 2 and 3).

No archaeological deposits were observed nor finds recovered in either area.

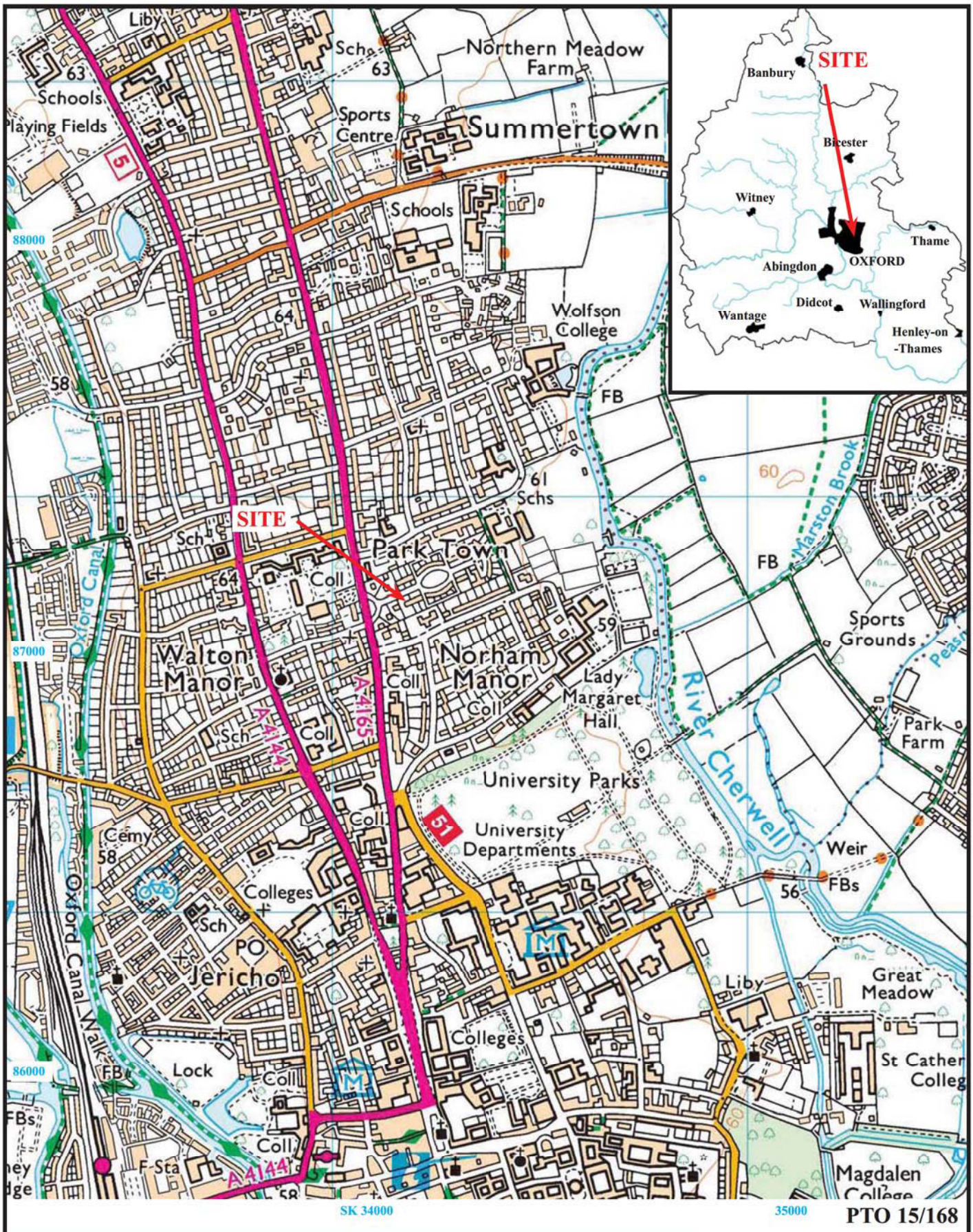
The only part of the listed building itself affected by the works was a modern extension. The only original part that might have been affected was the cellar door and an area of polychromatic brickwork around it (Elliott 2015, fig. 9 and pl. 5) but this was retained in place (Pl. 4).

Conclusion

Despite the archaeological potential of the area no features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the course of the watching brief.

References

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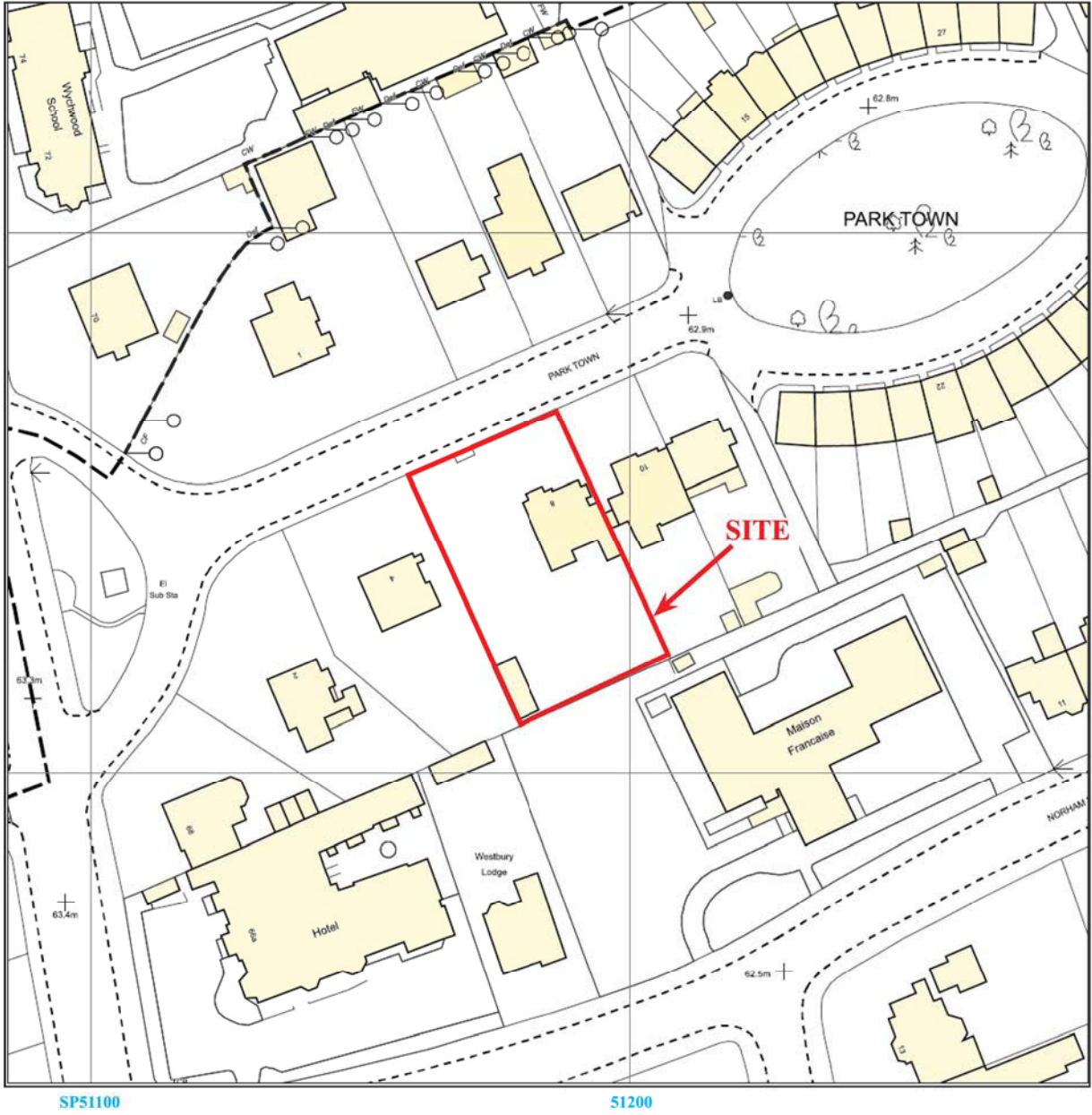


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Figure 1. Location of site within Summertown and Oxfordshire

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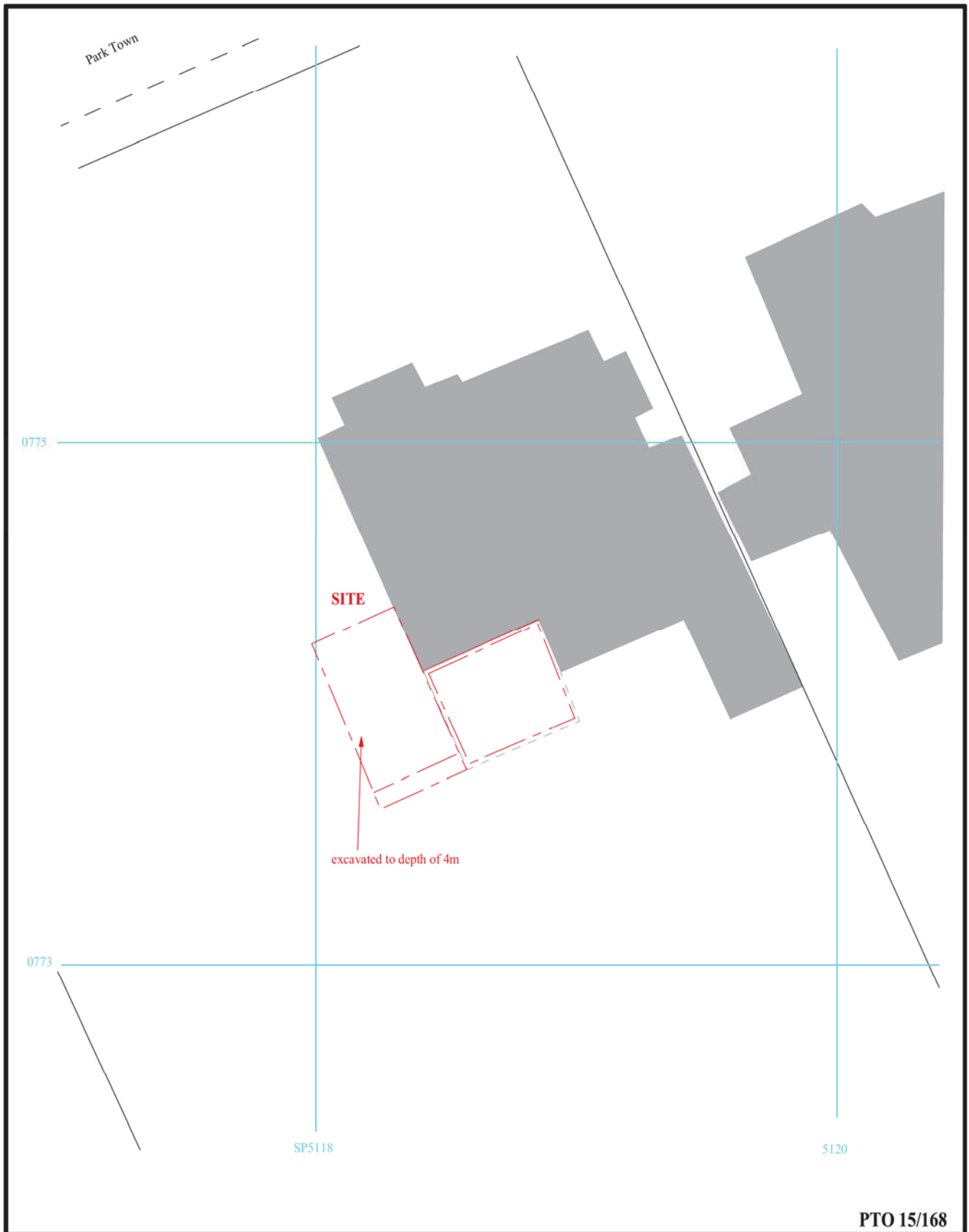
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Park Town.

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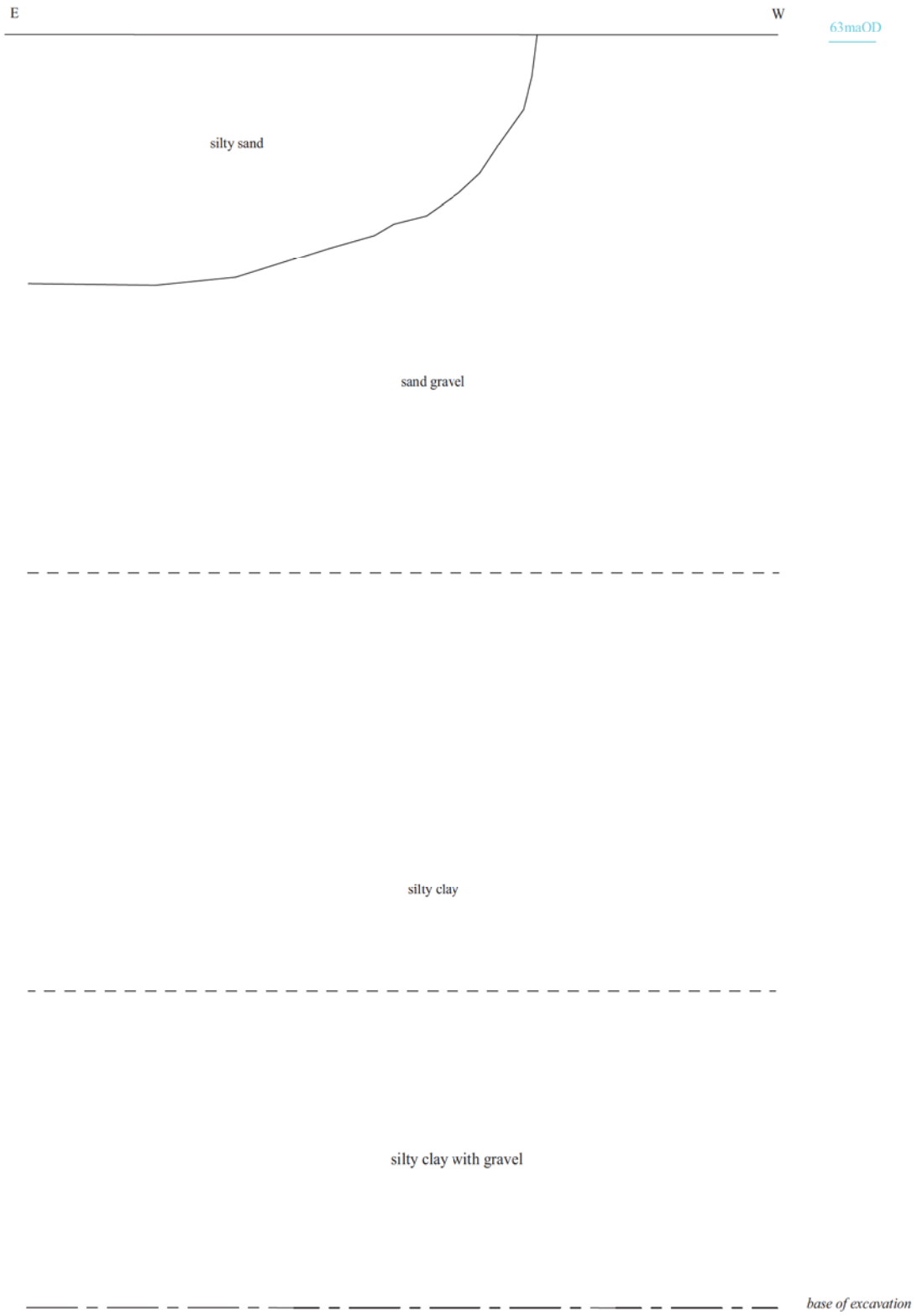
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Figure 3. Location of observed areas (inside and outside the house).



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Interior excavation, looking south, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Exterior excavation, looking south, Scale: 2m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Exterior excavation, completed, looking southeast.



Plate 4. Retained cellar door, looking east, Scale: 1m.

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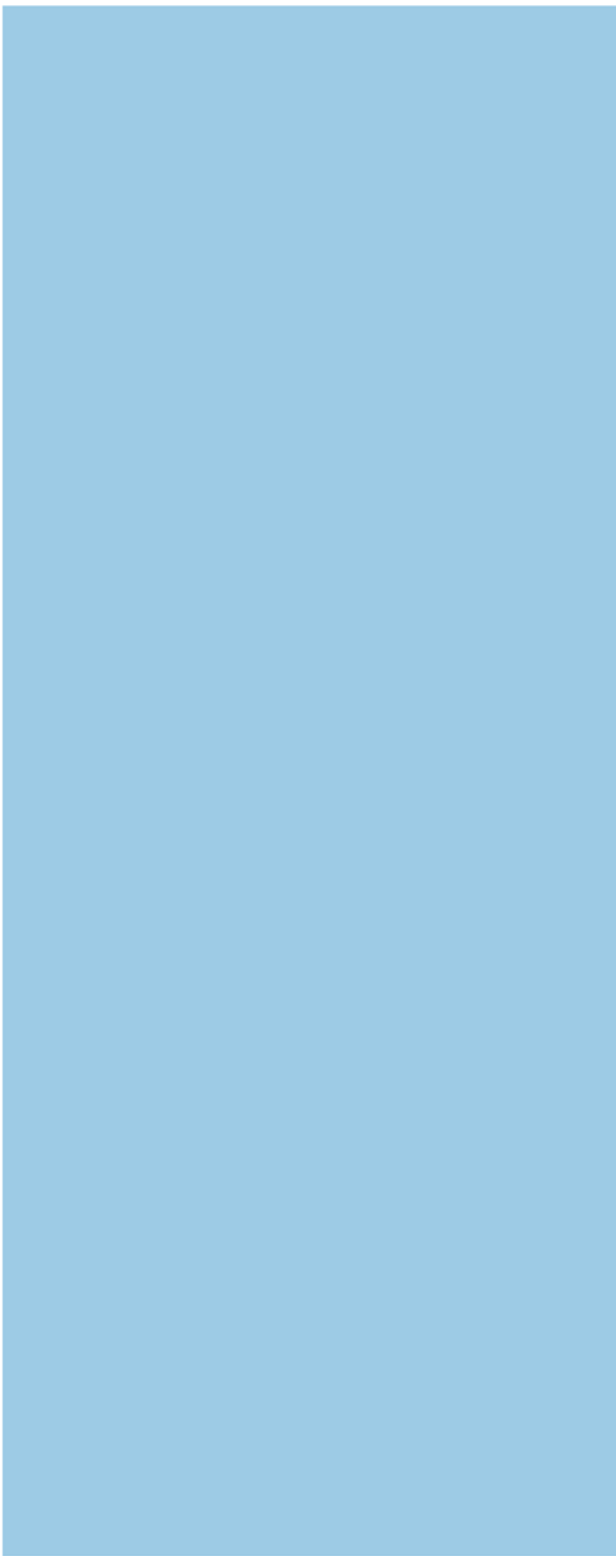
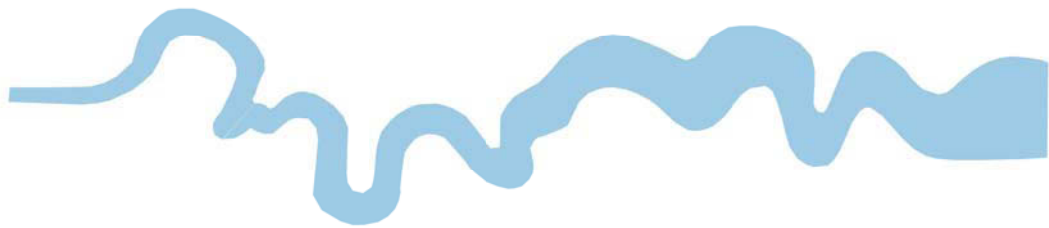
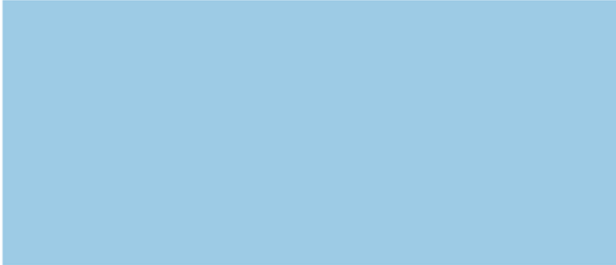
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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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