

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**New boundary wall at the church of St James the Less,
Pangbourne, West Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Lizzi Lewins

Site Code: JLP 16/67

(SU 6346 7642)

New boundary wall at the church of St James the Less, Pangbourne, West Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For St James the Less Parochial Church Council

by Lizzi Lewins

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code JLP 16/67

August 2016

Summary

Site name: St James the Less, Pangbourne, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 6346 7642

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 26th - 27th May 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Ellen McManus-Fry

Site code: JLP 16/67

Summary of results: No archaeological features were observed. A small number of artefacts of late post-medieval/modern date were observed but retained on site. A small collection of disarticulated human bone was returned to the church.

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

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 11.08.16 Steve Preston ✓ 11.08.16

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Report 16/67

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out in the churchyard of St James the Less, Pangbourne, West Berkshire (SU 6346 7642) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr John Radice, of The Old Post Office, Berrick Salome, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 6JN on behalf of St James the Less Parochial Church Council.

Planning consent (app 15/01731/FUL) has been gained from West Berkshire Council for the alteration of a boundary wall and formation of a new pedestrian access at St James the Less, Pangbourne, West Berkshire. The consent includes a condition (8) relating to archaeology which requires that an archaeological watching brief take place during the groundworks due to the possibility of damage to or destruction of archaeological deposits.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Alex Godden, Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Ellen McManus-Fry on 26th and 27th May 2016 and the site code is BCB16/67.

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

Location, topography and geology

Pangbourne occupies the south bank of a sweeping bend in the River Thames, west of Reading (Fig. 1). The site is located to the north of the M4 and south of the Thames, on the western side of the A340 (Tidmarsh Road) (Fig. 2). The site comprises a flat parcel of land occupied by the church and graveyard. The underlying geology is mapped as second terrace deposits (BGS 2000) however the natural geology was not reached during the groundworks. The site lies at a height of *c.*43m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Pangbourne. Pangbourne has Saxon origins and is first mentioned in a land charter of AD844 and developed into a medieval

village. The church building itself (listed grade II) is of 18th-century date but is presumed to stand on the site of a medieval predecessor at the heart of the historic settlement. Few archaeological finds are recorded for nearby areas, but a Neolithic stone axe has been recovered. Several listed buildings dating from the 16th-18th centuries are located nearby. A previous evaluation (Hammond 2015) to the west of the site revealed the presence of Medieval and undated features as well as a small number of residual and unstratified prehistoric struck flints.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits or finds affected by the new construction work. This included the examination of any areas of ground reduction and the digging of foundation trenches as necessary. Any archaeological deposits that were threatened by the development were to be hand cleaned, excavated and recorded with sufficient time allowed in the groundworkers' schedule to permit this. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds. In the event of the discovery of human remains of post-medieval or modern date they were to be recorded but not otherwise archaeologically excavated and returned to the church for reinterment.

Results

The footing trench for the relocation of the wall and ground reduction were observed. Excavation took place using a mini-digger fitted with a toothed bucket and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Footing Trench (Fig 3-4, Pls 1-2, 4)

The trench measured 13.5m long, 0.60m wide and 0.50m deep and extended from the existing wall to meet with the path (Fig. 3). The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of orange brown sandy silt with large flint inclusions, constituting subsoil/graveyard soil (50). The natural geology was not exposed within the trench (Pls 1-2). A small square hole of 0.08m in width and uncertain depth (over 1m) was discovered within the trench 7m from the path, the purpose of which is unclear (Pl 4). Disarticulated human bone, animal bone, ceramic building material, flint, iron, pottery and glass were recovered from deposit 50. The human bone was returned to the church warden for reinterment.

Ground Reduction (Fig 3, Pl 3)

The area between the footing trench and existing wall was subject to ground reduction. The area of ground reduction measured 10.50m long, 2m wide and *c.*0.20m deep (Pl 3). Following the reduction it was observed that

topsoil remained in some areas whilst others had reduced down to the level of the subsoil/graveyard soil. Again the natural geology was not reached.

Finds

All the finds were recovered from subsoil/graveyard soil (50). Following identification the finds were retained on site.

Pottery

Two sherds of late post-medieval/modern pottery weighing 71g were recovered. The first is a white glazed rim sherd with a fine cream fabric. The second is a pale yellow glazed body sherd with a fine cream fabric.

Ceramic Building Material

Four fragments of ceramic building material weighing 391g were recovered. Three of the fragments are tile and one is brick with a small amount of cream coloured mortar remaining. All date to the post-medieval period.

Glass

Three pieces of glass weighing 46g were recovered. The first fragment is clear pale green with a thick section, the second slightly opaque pale green also with a thick section. The third fragment is thin clear glass with a small degree of patination. The glass is likely of post-medieval/modern date and appears to be vessel glass.

Flint

A single piece of struck flint weighing 3g was recovered. It is unclear whether this flint represents a residual prehistoric struck flint or is associated with the construction of the existing wall.

Metal

Three pieces of iron weighing 37g were recovered. The first is a square headed nail. Of the two remaining objects the shafts are twisted and terminate in points whilst the heads of the objects are rounded to form a loop. They are skewer-like in form and are most likely fence fittings and likely of post-medieval/modern date.

Animal Bone

Six fragments of animal bone weighing 191g were recovered. One of the fragments is identifiable as a proximal metacarpal from a sheep/goat which has been sliced across the shaft. A fragment of vertebra from a medium-sized mammal (sheep/goat, pig, deer) and bore five short cutmarks. Three of the fragments were from large mammal (cattle/horse) one of which was identified as a partial ulna.

Human Bone

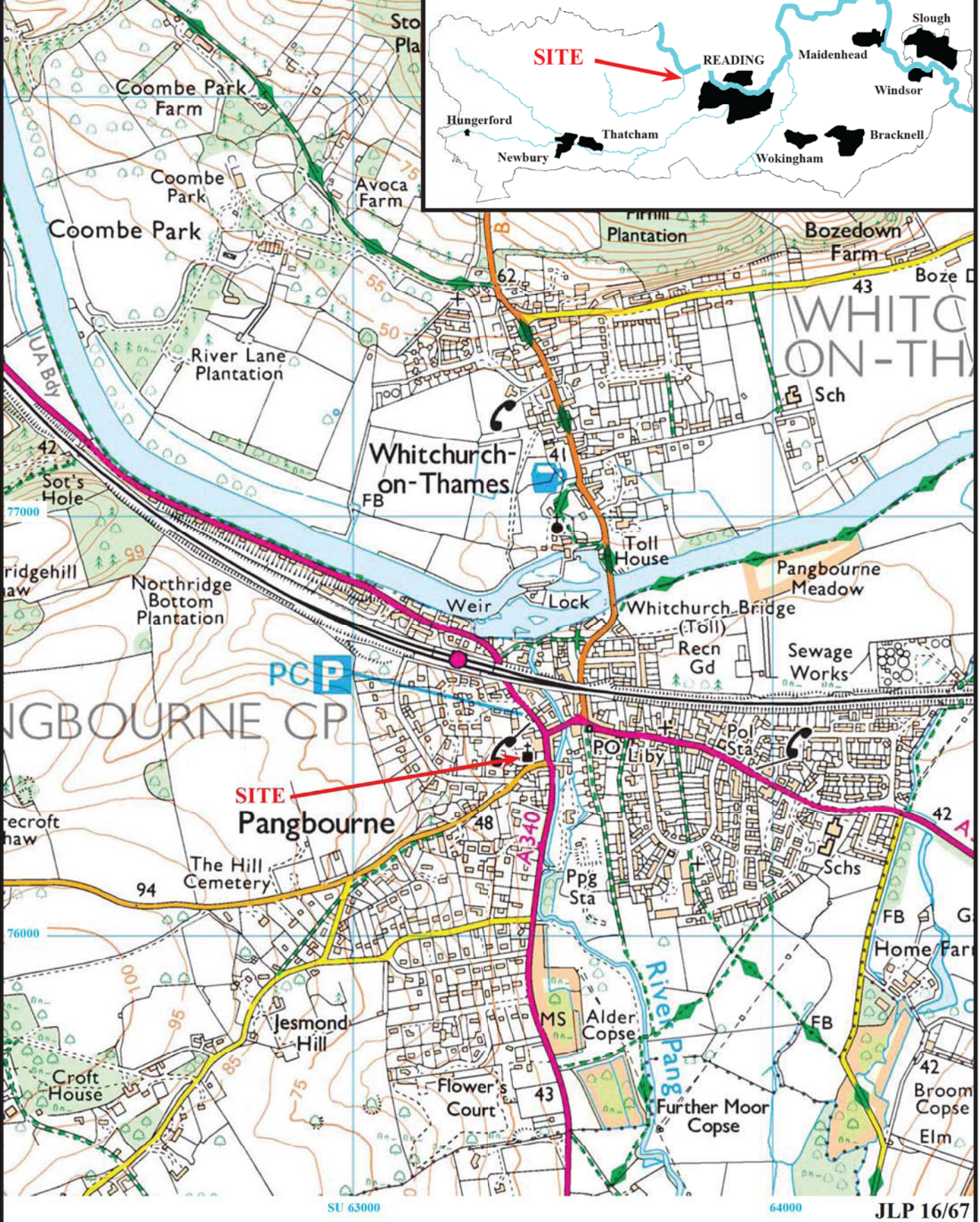
Disarticulated human bone was recovered and returned to the church for reinterment.

Conclusion

Despite the location of the site within the historic core of Pangbourne no archaeological features were observed during the course of the watching brief. The only finds recovered were of post-medieval/modern date and therefore not archaeologically significant in this instance.

References

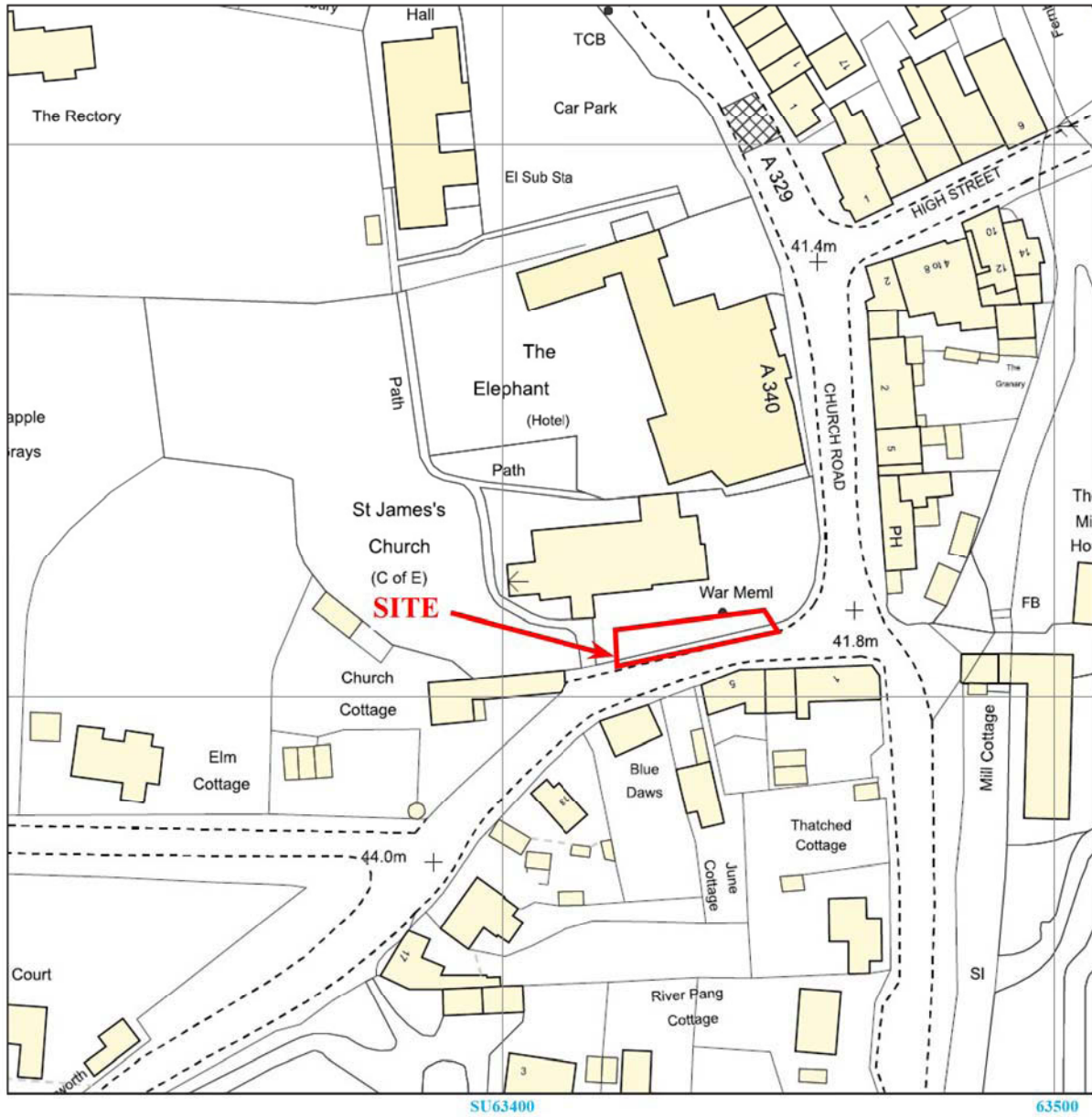
BGS, 2000, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Hammond, S, 2005, '14-16 Reading Road and Land off Meadow Lane, Pangbourne, West Berkshire, An Archaeological Evaluation', TVAS unpubl rep **05/77**, Reading
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London



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Figure 1. Location of site within Pangbourne and West Berkshire.

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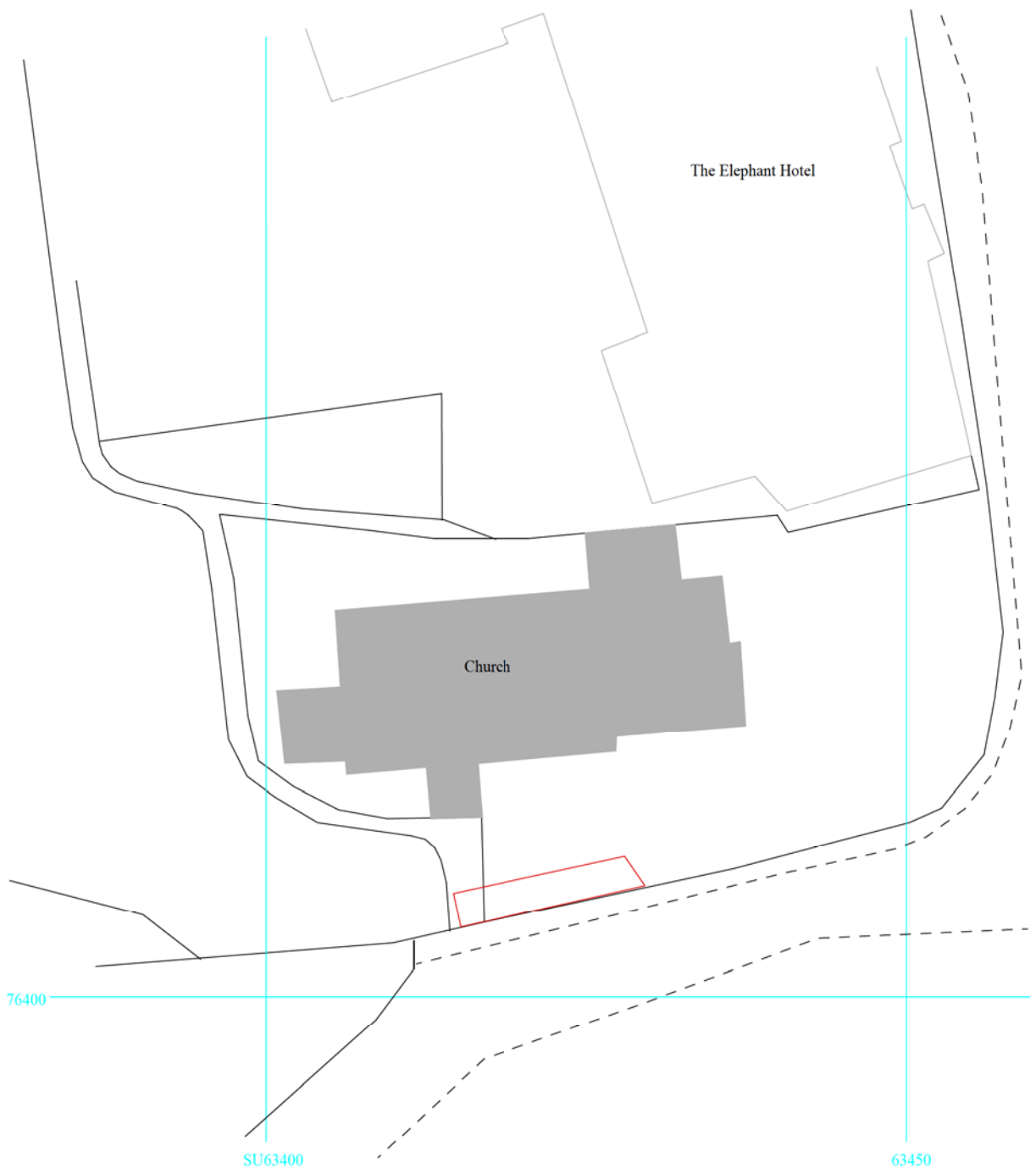


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site within Pangbourne and the Church grounds.

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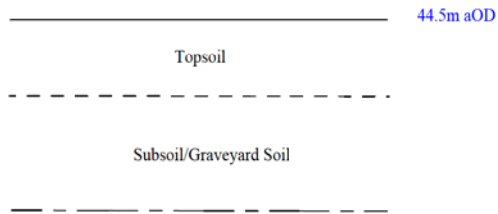
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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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Figure 4. Representative section for foundation trench.



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Plate 1. Footing Trench, looking East,
Scales: Horizontal 1m and Vertical 0.30m.



Plate 2. Footing Trench, South facing section,
Scales: Horizontal 1m and 0.30m.



Plate 3. Ground Reduction, looking East,
Scales: 1m and 0.30m.



Plate 4. Square Hole, looking South, Scale: 0.30m.

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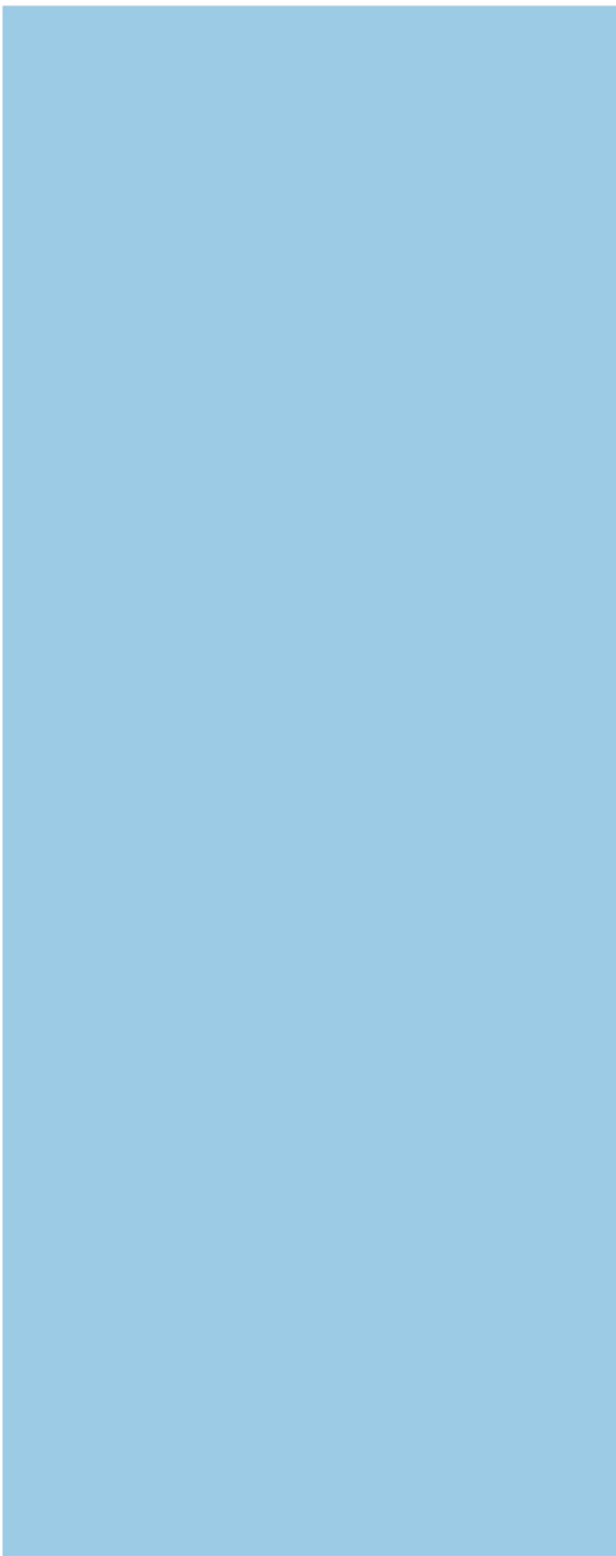
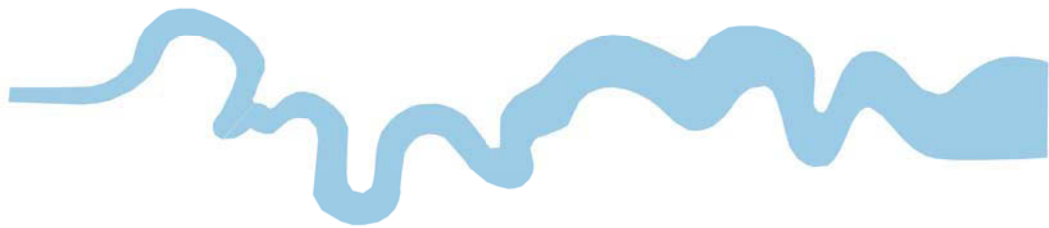
Site name,
Town, County
Archaeological Desk-based Assessment
Plates 1 - 4.

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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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