

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**The Woolpack, Church Street,
Wantage, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Genni Elliott

Site Code: WIW15/120

(SU 3973 8783)

The Woolpack, Church Street, Wantage, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Tom Swash

by Genni Elliott

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WIW 15/120b

February 2017

Summary

Site name: The Woolpack, Church Street, Wantage, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 3973 8783

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 16th March - 16th November 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Kyle Beaverstock, Ellen McManus-Fry

Site code: WIW 15/120

Area of site: 90 sq m

Summary of results: The watching brief comprised monitoring of the digging of a number of test pits and an area of ground reduction. Nothing of archaeological significance was revealed. The brick walls uncovered within the ground reduction for plots 9 and 10 are likely to relate to brewery buildings first seen on the 1878 Ordnance Survey map and demolished by 1967.

Monuments identified: Brewery

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service 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 All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: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 ✓ 28.02.17

The Woolpack, Church Street, Wantage, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Genni Elliott

Report 15/120b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at The Woolpack, Church Street, Wantage, Oxfordshire (SU 3973 8783; Fig.1). The work was commissioned Mr Robert Buchanan of BHP Harwood, The White Barn, Manor Farm, Manor Road, Wantage, OX12 8NE on behalf of Mr Tom Swash.

Planning permission (P15/V2041/FUL) including listed building consent (P15/V2042/LB) has been gained from the Vale of White Horse District Council to convert the building into residential accommodation with additional accommodation within the existing car park. This is subject to conditions (4 and 5) which require the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This entails a watching brief to be carried out, to which this report refers. The Woolpack Inn itself was subject to a separate building recording (Elliott, 2015).

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Hugh Coddington, archaeological advisor to the Vale of White Horse District Council (Coddington, 2016). The fieldwork was undertaken by Kyle Beaverstock, Mike Johnson and Ellen McManus-Fry between 16th March - 16th November 2016 and the site code is WIW 15/120.

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 Woolpack Inn is located on the south side of Church Street, next door but one to the Vale and Downland Museum and to the southeast of the Church in the centre of Wantage (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 90m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as Upper Chalk (BGS 1971). The natural geology exposed on site was Greensand. More recent surveys also agree that the natural geology is Upper Greensand (BGS viewer, accessed 1/12/16).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Mr Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. In summary the site lies within the historic core of the settlement just to the south of the 13th church and market place (Foster et al 1975). However, more recent fieldwork on the eastern fringes of the town centre have revealed extensive medieval occupation suggesting that the medieval town was larger than originally thought or that its focus is further to the east (Lewis 2016). Evidence of Bronze Age, Roman and Saxon activity has also been recorded in the locality (Lewis 2016; Holbrook 1997) but a recent evaluation on Church Street found little of archaeological interest (Platt 2015). Roman material has also been found on a site immediately adjacent to the proposal site.

The inn is listed (grade II), of 18th century date and has been subject to building recording (Elliott 2015).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This was to involve the monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and include observation of surface stripping, the excavation of foundations and service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work as necessary.

Results

The watching brief comprised three components, the digging of test pits, an area of ground reduction and the digging of service trenches.

Test pits

A total of three test pits were observed (Pls 3-5).

Test Pit 1

Test Pit 1 was located at the southern end of the site, outside the area covered by Plots 9 and 10 (below). It measured 0.8m by 0.5m by 0.64m deep and consisted of 0.30m of made ground including tarmac and hard core above natural greensand.

Test Pit 2

Test Pit 2 was located centrally within the area of Plots 9 and 10 (below). It measured 1.5m by 0.48m by 0.608m deep and consisted of 0.28m of made ground including tarmac and hard core above brick; possibly part of a foundation.

Test Pit 3

Test Pit 3 was located on the eastern edge of Plots 9 and 10 (below). It measured 0.9m by 0.7m by 0.82m deep and consisted of 0.28m of made ground including tarmac and hard core above natural greensand.

Ground reduction

Plots 9 and 10 (Fig. 3, Pls. 1-2)

An area measuring 18m by 5.8m was reduced in height in the southeast corner of the site in the location of plots 9 and 10. A total of 0.20m of Tarmac, hard core and made ground was removed to expose the natural greensand. The natural geology was severely truncated by two large concrete footings, two brick walls, aligned north west-south east and a further wall aligned north east-south west as well as services. The walls most likely relate to the long building running along the eastern boundary shown on the 1878 Ordnance Survey map, which labels the complex as a *Brewery*. This building had been demolished by 1967. No archaeological deposits were revealed.

Service Trenches (Fig. 3)

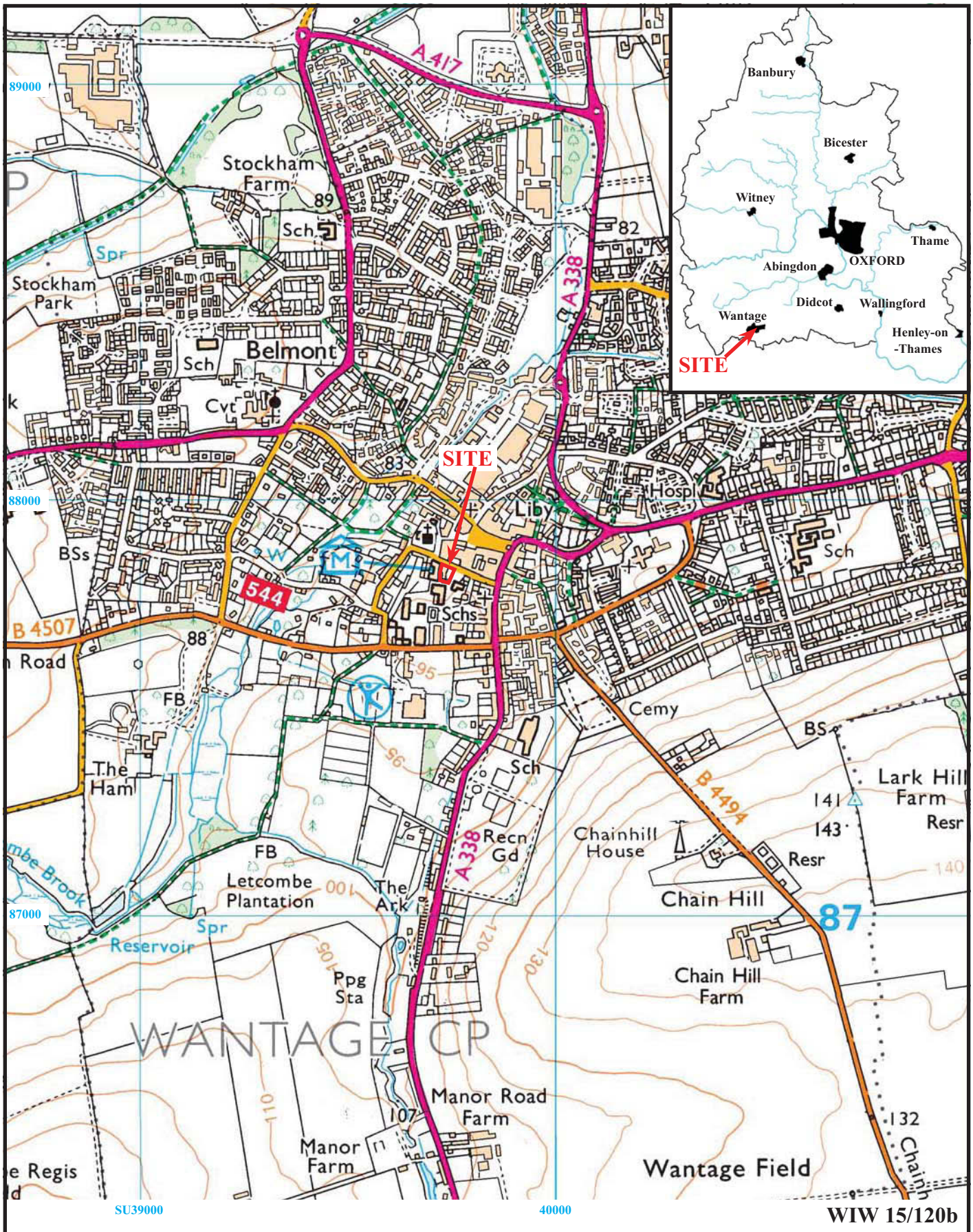
The service trenches was aligned approximately north east-south west with multiple spurs to the east and west. In general the trenches measured 0.30-0.85m wide by 0.50-0.75m deep and the stratigraphy consisted of between 0.30 and 0.75m of made ground above the natural geology. No archaeological deposits were revealed

Conclusion

The watching brief revealed nothing of archaeological significance pre-dating the 19th century. A number of brick walls uncovered within the area of ground reduction for Plots 9 and 10 are likely to relate to brewery buildings first seen on the 1878 Ordnance Survey map and demolished by 1967.

References

- BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 253, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Coddington, H, 2016, The Woolpack Inn, Church Street, Wantage, Design Brief for archaeological watching brief, Oxford
- Elliott, G, 2015, The Woolpack, Church Street, Wantage, Oxfordshire, Building Recording, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 15/120 Reading
- Foster, R, Rodwell, K, Squires, R and Turner, H, 1975, 'Wantage', in K Rodwell (ed), *Historic Towns in Oxfordshire*, Oxford Archaeol Unit Survey 3, Oxford, 163–9
- Lewis, J, 2016, *Bronze Age, Saxon and medieval evidence from Wantage, Oxfordshire, Excavations at St Mary's and St Gabriel's Schools*, TVAS Monograph **24**
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Platt, D, 2016, Former police station, Church Street, Wantage, Oxfordshire, an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report CSW15/201, Reading

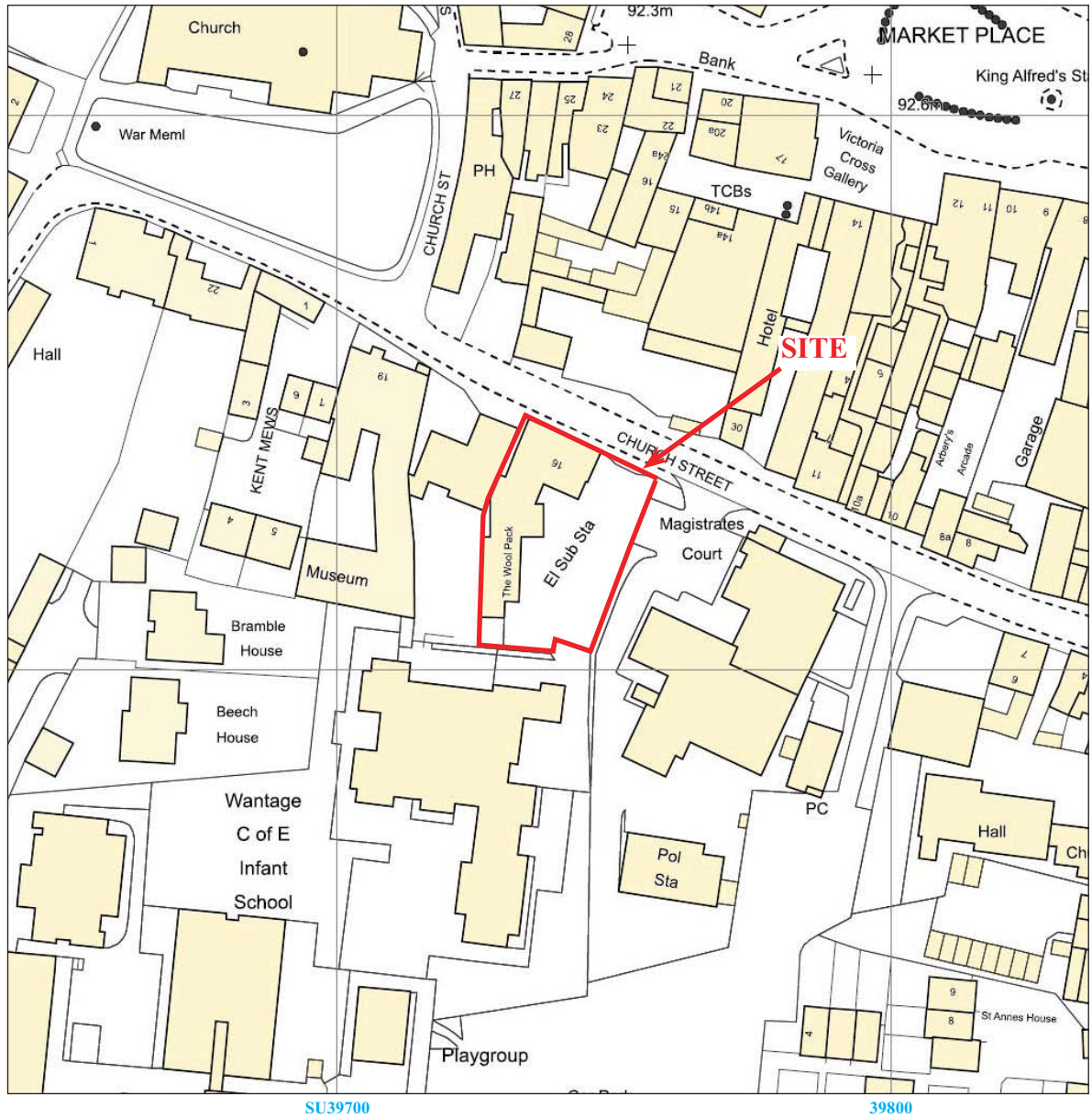


**The Woolpack, Church Street,
Wantage, Oxfordshire, 2016
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Wantage and Oxfordshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital mapping at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100034184

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
 SERVICES



WIW 15/120b

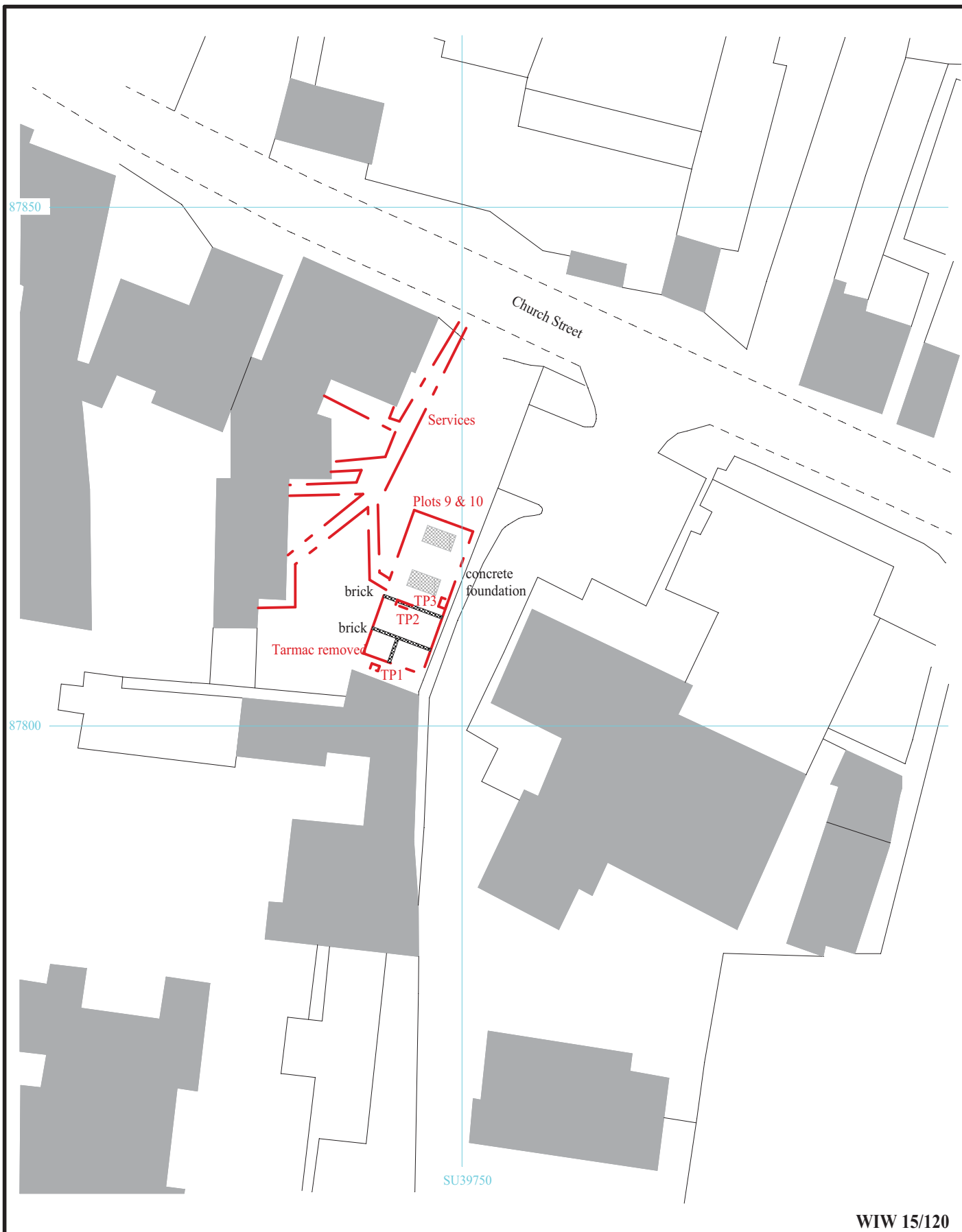


**The Woolpack, Church Street,
Wantage, Oxfordshire, 2016
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Church Street.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence (Ref.100019980)
Crown copyright and database right reserved. Scale 1:1250

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



WIW 15/120

**The Woolpack, Church Street,
Wantage, Berkshire, 2016
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Location of observed areas.





Plate 1. Ground reduction, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Ground reduction, looking south west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

WIW 15/120

**The Woolpack, Church Street,
Wantage, Oxfordshire, 2016
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 1 - 2.**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Test pit 1 looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Test pit 2 looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 5. Test pit 3, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.

WIW 15/120

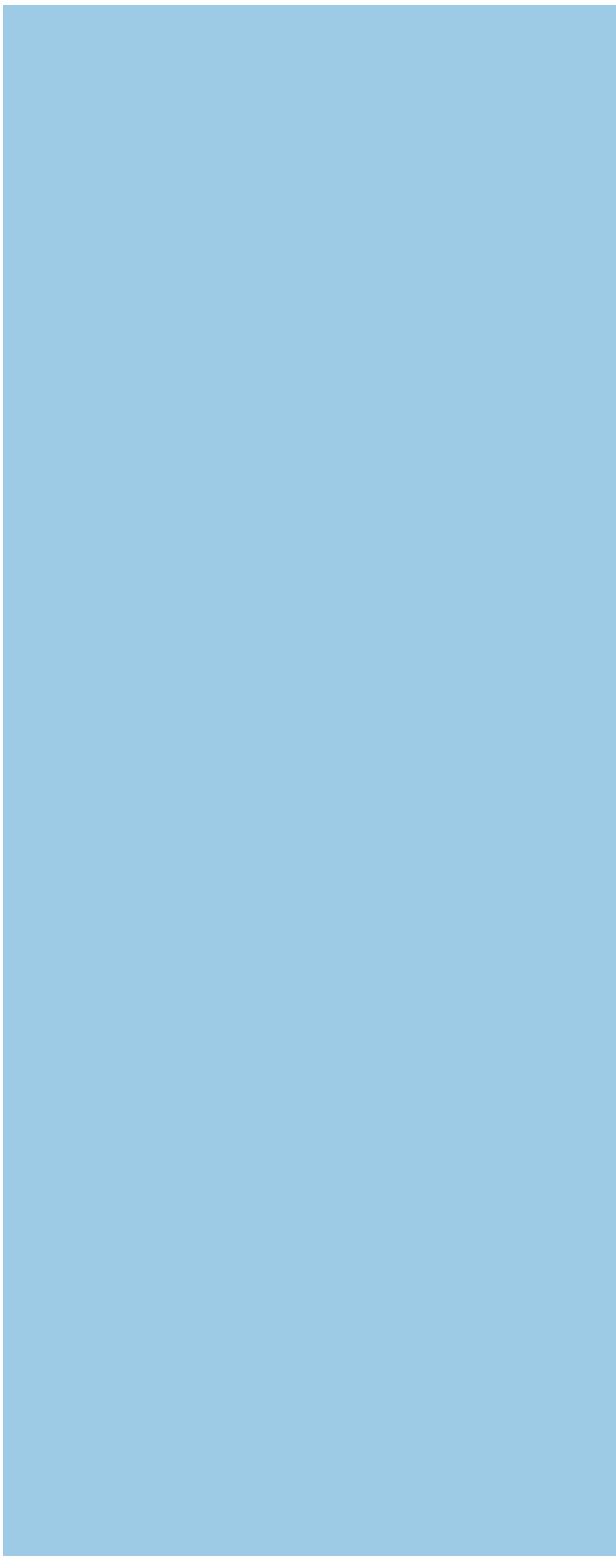
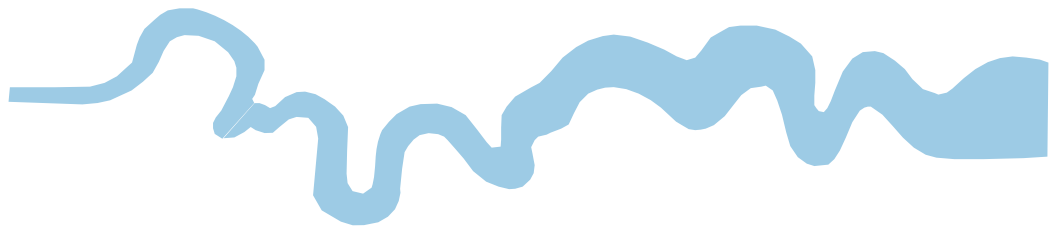
**The Woolpack, Church Street,
Wantage, Oxfordshire, 2016
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 3 - 5.**

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**