

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**18 Wood Street, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Site Code: WSW17/05

(SU 6079 8917)

**18 Wood Street, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs Dunne

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WSW 17/05

May 2017

Summary

Site name: 18 Wood Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 6079 8917

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 8th –10th May 2017

Project Coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Andrew Munding, Luis Esteves

Site code: WSW 17/05

Area of site: 36 sq m

Summary of results: Observations were made of the ground reduction over the footprint of the new extension. This reduction removed c. 0.39m of topsoil to level the site with the path directly behind the existing dwelling. The footings that were dug from this level revealed 0.8m of made ground layer above subsoil but did not reach natural gravel geology. Only modern finds were observed and nothing of archaeological significance was encountered.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 15.05.17 Steve Preston✓ 12.05.17

18 Wood Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Report 17/05

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 18 Wood Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (SU 6079 8917) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the home owner, Mr Daniel Dunne.

Planning permission (16/S3624/HH) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a new single-storey rear extension to the property. The existing house is Grade II Listed and dates from the mid-18th century. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, the consent is subject to two conditions (5 and 6) relating to archaeology, requiring an archaeological watching brief to be maintained during the groundworks.

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 for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, the adviser to the District Council on matters pertaining to archaeology within the planning process. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin and Luis Esteves, from 8th to 10th May 2017 and the site code is WSW 17/05.

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 within the historic core of Wallingford (Fig. 1). Wood Street is located in the east of the historic centre to the east of the High Street, and is considered to be on the original alignment of the Medieval or even Saxon grid street pattern. The site is located in the garden of the 18th-century house that fronts Wood Street and is surrounded by residential development (Fig. 2). The site lies a height of approximately 47.9m above Ordnance Datum, with the underlying geology mapped as river terrace gravel (BGS 1980).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the town's historic core, which primarily includes the earthwork circuit of the Saxon town (*burh*) which developed into the Medieval market town (Airs *et al* 1975; Preston 2010; Christie *et al* 2013). Wood Street is a north–south aligned road in the south-east quadrant of the Saxon town and is thought to follow the line of a Saxon route in this part of the town. The frontage of the building is a Listed (Grade II) mid-18th century original, with the rear thought to be earlier. The site is roughly 100m north-west of St Leonard's church, and also close to the site of the former church of St Michaels, which is thought to lie to the north on the opposite side of New Road. It was thought to be dilapidated by the 14th century, and by 1374 was absorbed into St Peters (Dewey 2009). Burials and a large medieval pit were encountered in a 1974 excavation (Roffe 2009; Christie *et al.* 2013; WAHS 1975) during extension work to the Cattlemarket car park. It was therefore thought deposits contemporary with the medieval occupation of this site or Saxon deposits could be encountered.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks, including surface stripping, footing excavation and service trenches and other landscaping works where necessary.

Results

The first element of the works required ground reduction of the garden to lower it to the height of the garden path at the rear of the property, and more in keeping with the floor height of the existing property. A depth of up to 0.39m of topsoil was removed over an area of 5.8m by 6.5m (Fig. 3). Two test pits were dug prior to the reduction to establish the depth of topsoil.

Test pit 1 positioned by the south boundary wall, was excavated to a depth of 0.39m and was 1.2m x 0.75m. The dark brown grey topsoil contained modern transfer-printed 'china' fragments and tile.

Test pit 2 positioned to the north within the lawn was 1.05m x 0.73m and was excavated to a depth of 0.27m. This reached the top of loose bricks which formed a soakaway at this location. Again only modern material was noted within the disturbed deposits.

After the ground had been reduced, further observations were undertaken on the excavation of footing trenches, all within the reduced area. These were 0.7m wide and excavated to a depth of 1m below the reduced

level (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2). The stratigraphy was consistent throughout the trenches. The first deposit encountered, which reached a depth of 0.8m, was a dark brown sandy silt made ground, which contained nothing to indicate date. Below this was a yellow red sandy silt was devoid of finds, and may have been a naturally derived deposit. Only 0.2m of this layer was exposed. No natural gravel was exposed and no medieval nor earlier finds were encountered.

Finds

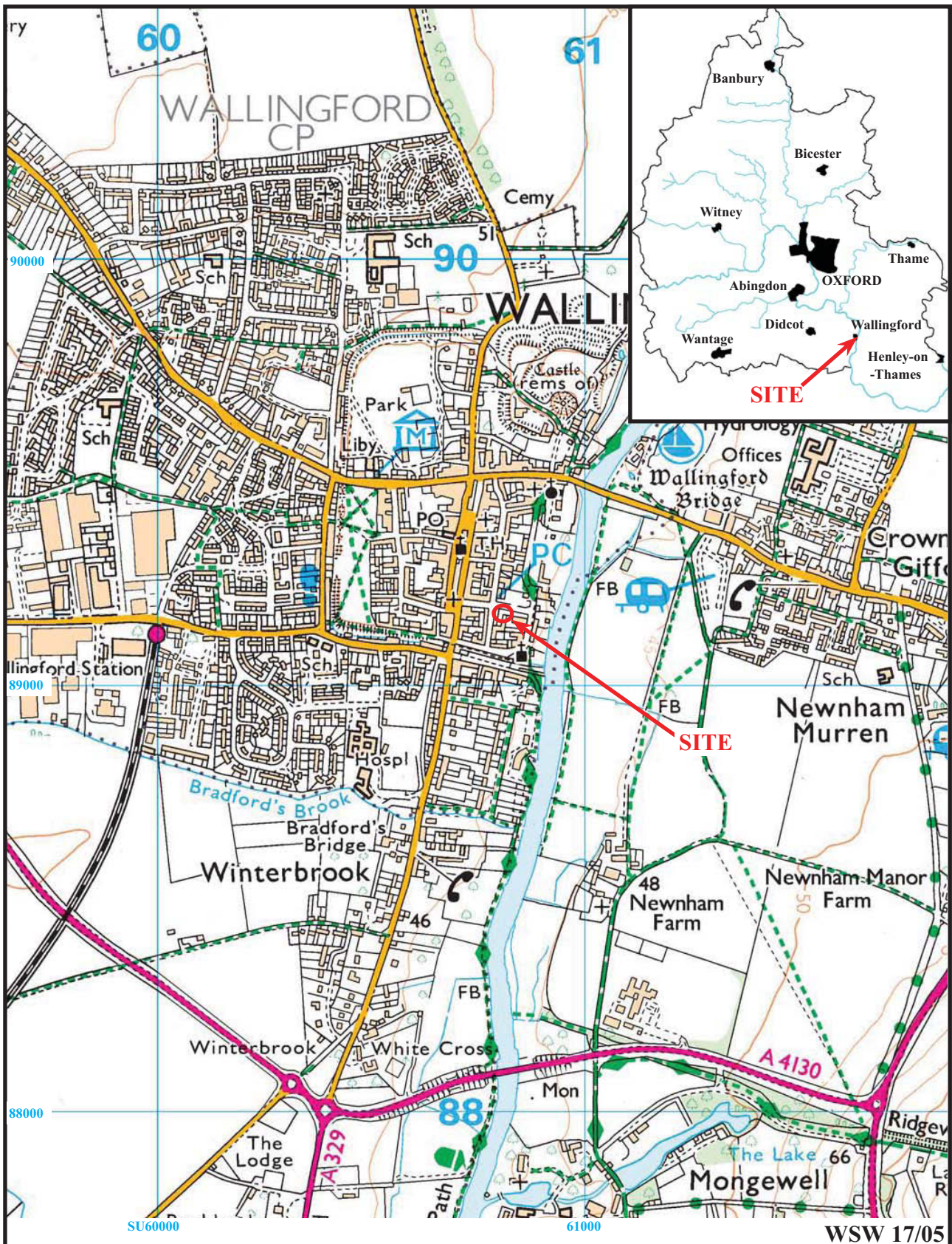
A small collection of ceramic building material was identified on the site, all seen to be modern as were the few sherds of pottery that were also observed and retained on site.

Conclusion

The full depth of the required footing was observed but no natural gravel geology was encountered. Finds from the made ground were few, and all modern. There was no evidence of medieval or earlier finds or features.

References

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 254 (Henley-on-Thames sheet), Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Christie, N, Crieghton, O and Edgeworth, M, 2013, 'Investigating the townscape and hinterland: method and sources', in N Christie and O Crieghton, with M Edgeworth and H Hamerow, *Transforming Townscapes: From burh to borough: the archaeology of Wallingford AD 800-1400*, Soc Medieval Archaeol Monogr **35**, London, 15–44
- Dewey, J, 2009, 'The origins of Wallingford: topography, boundaries and parishes', in K S B Keats-Rohan and D Roffe (eds), *The Origins of the Borough of Wallingford: archaeological and historical perspectives*, BAR Brit Ser **494**, Oxford, 17–26
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- Roffe, D, 2009, 'Introduction', in K S B Keats-Rohan and D Roffe (eds), *The Origins of the Borough of Wallingford: archaeological and historical perspectives*, BAR Brit Ser **494**, Oxford, 1–4
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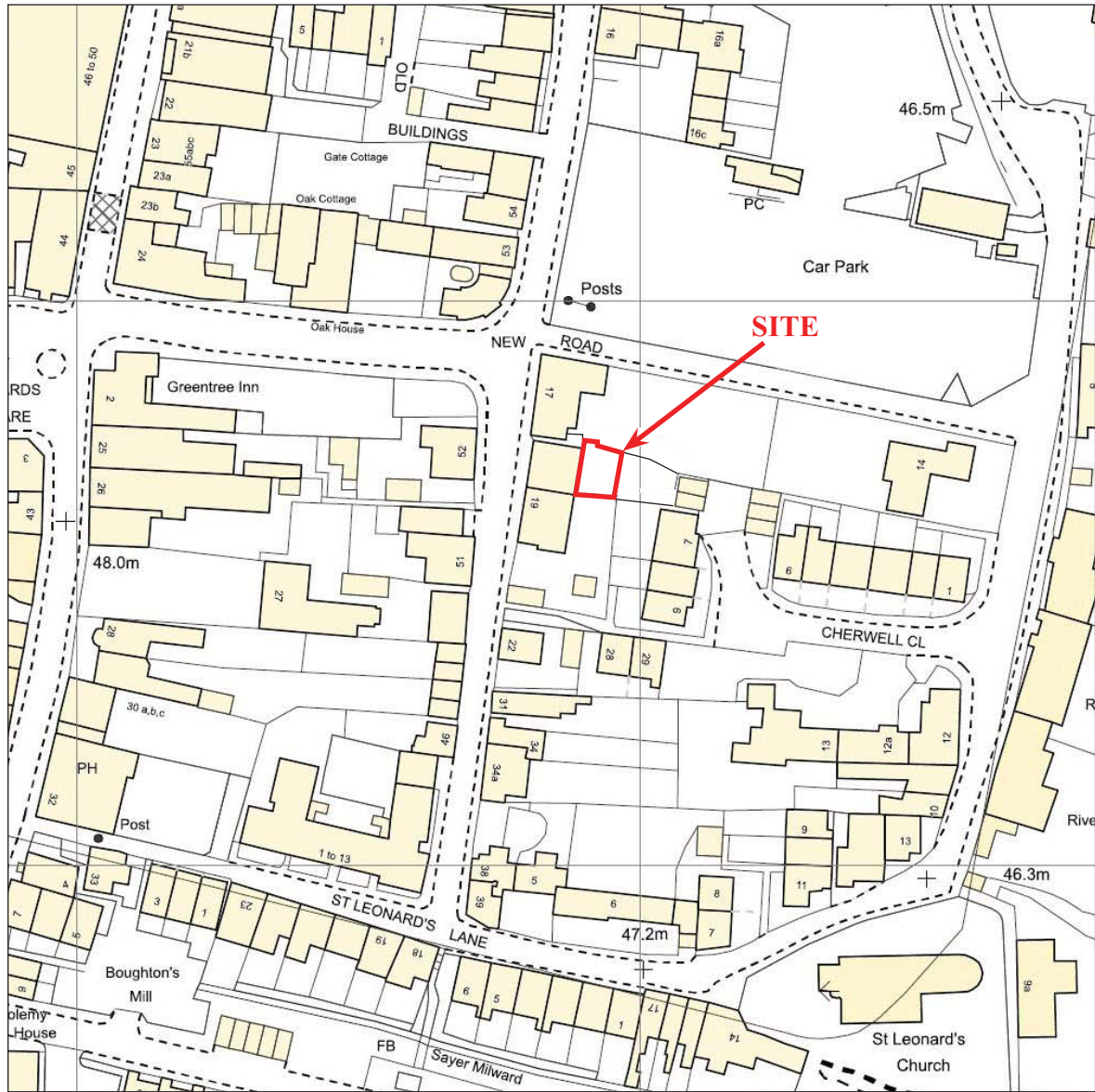
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wallingford and
Oxfordshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Wood Street.

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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47.6maOD

Dark brown sandy silt (made ground)

Yellow red sandy silt (subsoil?)

base of trench

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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Extension footings after excavation, looking south west, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Representative section, looking east, Scale: 1m.

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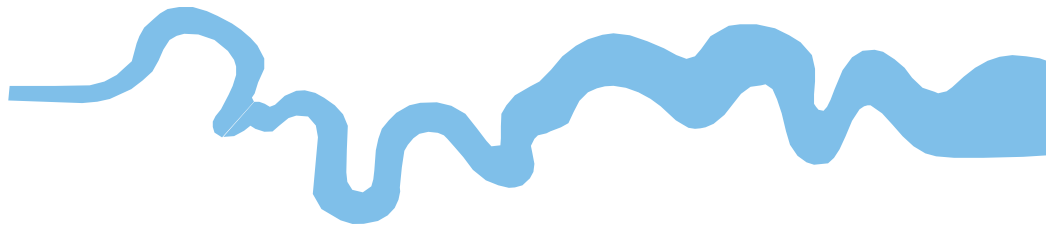
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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