

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Parrotts Yard, 15 Thameside,
Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Luis Esteves

Site Code: PYH16/218

(SU 7629 8257)

**Parrotts Yard, 15 Thameside,
Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Chesterton Commercial Group Limited**

by Luís Esteves

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PYH16/218

February 2017

Summary

Site name: Parrotts Yard, 15 Thameside, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 7629 8257

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 26th January 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Luís Esteves

Site code: PYH 16/218

Area of site: 421 sq m

Summary of results: Two of the three trenches excavated revealed relatively modern disturbance and truncation of the archaeologically relevant levels. A third trench revealed a less disturbed stratigraphy. However, no archaeological features nor deposits were observed and the site is considered to have very low archaeological potential.

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

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 10.02.17 Steve Preston✓ 09.02.17

Parrotts Yard, 15 Thameside, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Luís Esteves

Report 16/218

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Parrotts Yard, 15 Thameside, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire (SU 7629 8257) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Neil Boddington of Boddingtons Planning, 31 Shirburn Street, Watlington, Oxfordshire, OX49 5BU on behalf of Chesterton Commercial Group Limited, Hook Farm, Henley Road, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 2DS.

Planning permission (P16/S0436/FUL) has been granted from South Oxfordshire District Council to demolish the existing buildings on the site and erect a new office block. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by the groundworks the consent is subject to a condition (12) requiring a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's Local Plan policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Archaeology Officer with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, advising the District, and based on a brief supplied by him (Oram 2016). The fieldwork was undertaken by Luís Esteves and Cosmo Bacon on 26th January 2017 and the site code is PYH16/218. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the centre of Henley-on-Thames, and consists of a small yard in Thameside, north of the train station, south of the White Hill bridge, and west side of the Thames (Fig. 1). The site was being used as car park and has a small building in the southwest area used as a shed (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Head Gravel (BGS 1980) and this was observed in the trenches. The site is at an elevation of *c.*32m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2016). The site is located in an area of archaeological potential within the historic core of the town and close to the medieval Henley bridge, first recorded AD1234 (Airs, et al 1975). The site is also 80m south of the 13th-century St Mary's Church and within the area of the medieval rectory, established in the AD1240s and demolished in the early 19th century. Archaeological excavations in the 1980s recorded the foundations of the Rectory and a metalled surface thought to relate to the associated Tithe barn. A 14th- to 15th-century pit was also recorded. A 15th-century grade II listed building is located approximately 30m south-east of the site on Friday Street and a 16th-century listed building is located along Thameside. There are numerous other listed buildings in the immediate vicinity.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. The work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warranted preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were;

to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present; and

to determine if any deposits relating to the medieval rectory were present.

It was proposed to dig three trenches, each 8m long and 1.6m-2m wide. The trenches were positioned to target the location of the new building (Fig. 3). Overburden was to be removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief.

Results

Three trenches were dug as close as possible to their intended locations (Fig. 3). These measured between 7m and 9m in length, 1.6m wide, and between 0.8m and 1.4m in depth.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs. 3 and 4)

Trench 1 was aligned S - N and was 9m long and was abandoned at a depth of 0.8m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of made ground overlying 0.7m of modern backfill containing concrete and brick. Three modern walls/foundations were observed, probably from a basement of a modern building. These footings severely impeded the digging of the trench to expose the natural geology.

Trench 2 (Figs. 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 2 was aligned W - E and was 7m long and 1.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of Tarmac/hoggin overlying 0.5m of made ground and modern rubble overlying 0.5m of grey silty clay with modern rubble (made ground) overlying a brownish grey gravel natural geology. The full extent of the natural geology was not exposed but was observed at a depth of 1.8m in a test pit at the east end of the trench.

Trench 3 (Figs. 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned S - N and was 8m long and 1.33m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.07m of concrete overlying 0.19m of yellow hoggin sand overlying 0.41m of light brown silty clay with modern rubble overlying 0.55m of dark brown silty clay subsoil overlying a brownish grey gravel natural geology.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered during the archaeological evaluation.

Conclusion

Three trenches were dug as intended. All three trenches revealed deep deposits of made ground. The location of one trench (1) appears to have been that of a backfilled basement with deep truncation and modern foundations. A second trench (2) revealed made ground directly overlying natural geology well below the level where gravel and an overlying natural subsoil were observed in a third trench (3). No archaeological deposits or finds were observed during the evaluation and on the basis of these results, the site therefore can be said to have very low archaeological potential.

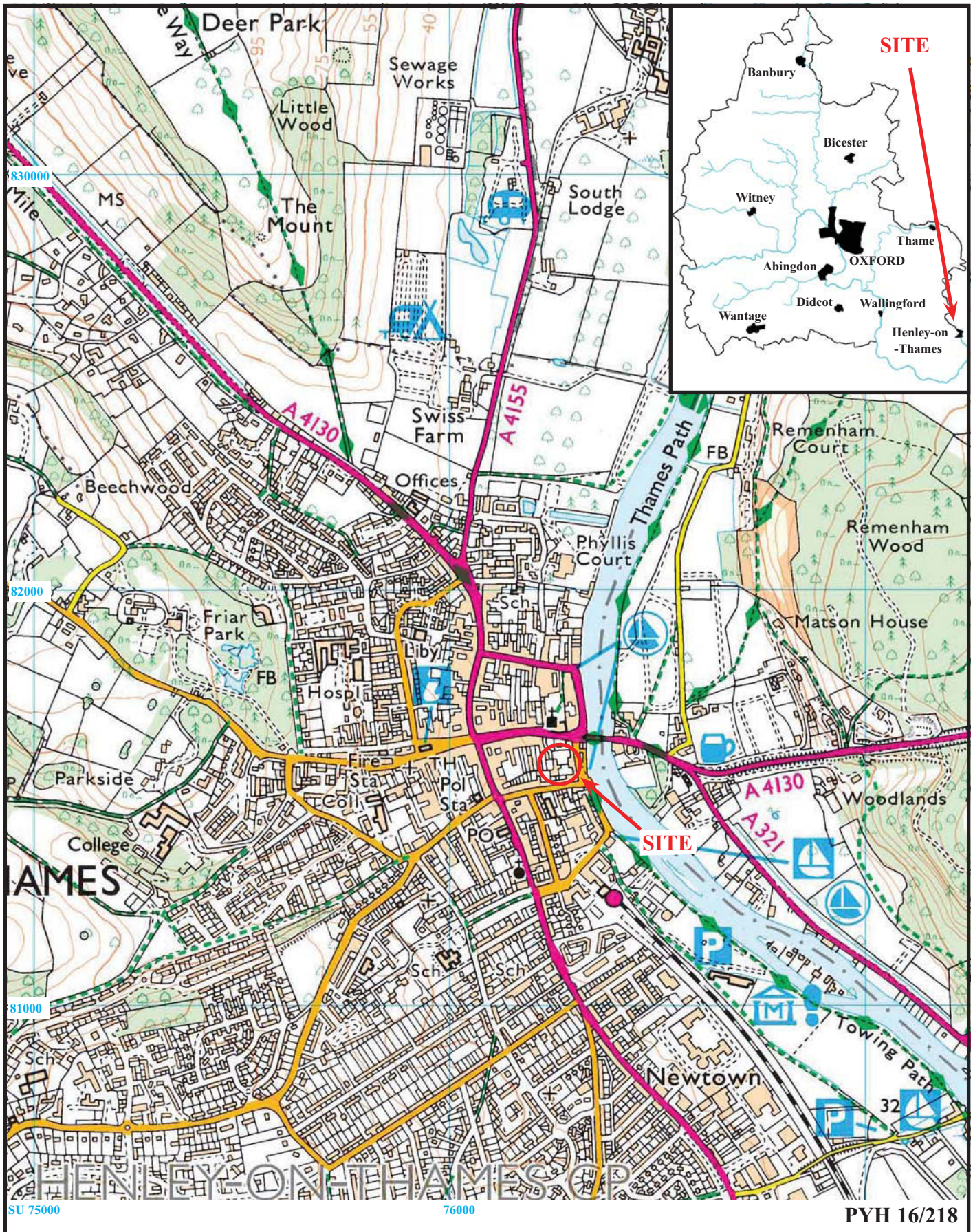
References

- Airs, M, Rodwell, K and Turner, H, 1975, 'Henley', in K Rodwell (ed), *Historic Towns in Oxfordshire*, Oxford Archaeol Unit Survey 3, Oxford, 125–33
- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Oram, R, 2016, '15 Thameside, Henley-on-Thames: Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, Oxford

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south and west end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	9	1.6	0.8	0-0.1m made ground, 0.1m-0.8m modern backfilling with rubble and building foundations.
2	7	1.6	1.4 (test pit 1.8m)	0-0.35m tarmac/hoggin, 0.35m-0.85m made ground with modern rubble, 0.85m-1.8m grey silty clay with rubble made ground; 1.8m+ brownish grey gravel natural geology. [Pls 1 and 2]
3	8	1.6	1.33	0-07m concrete, 0.07m-0.26m yellow hoggin, 0.26m-0.65m brown silty clay with modern rubble, 0.65m-1.3m dark brown silty clay subsoil, 1.3m+ brownish grey natural geology. [Pl. 3]

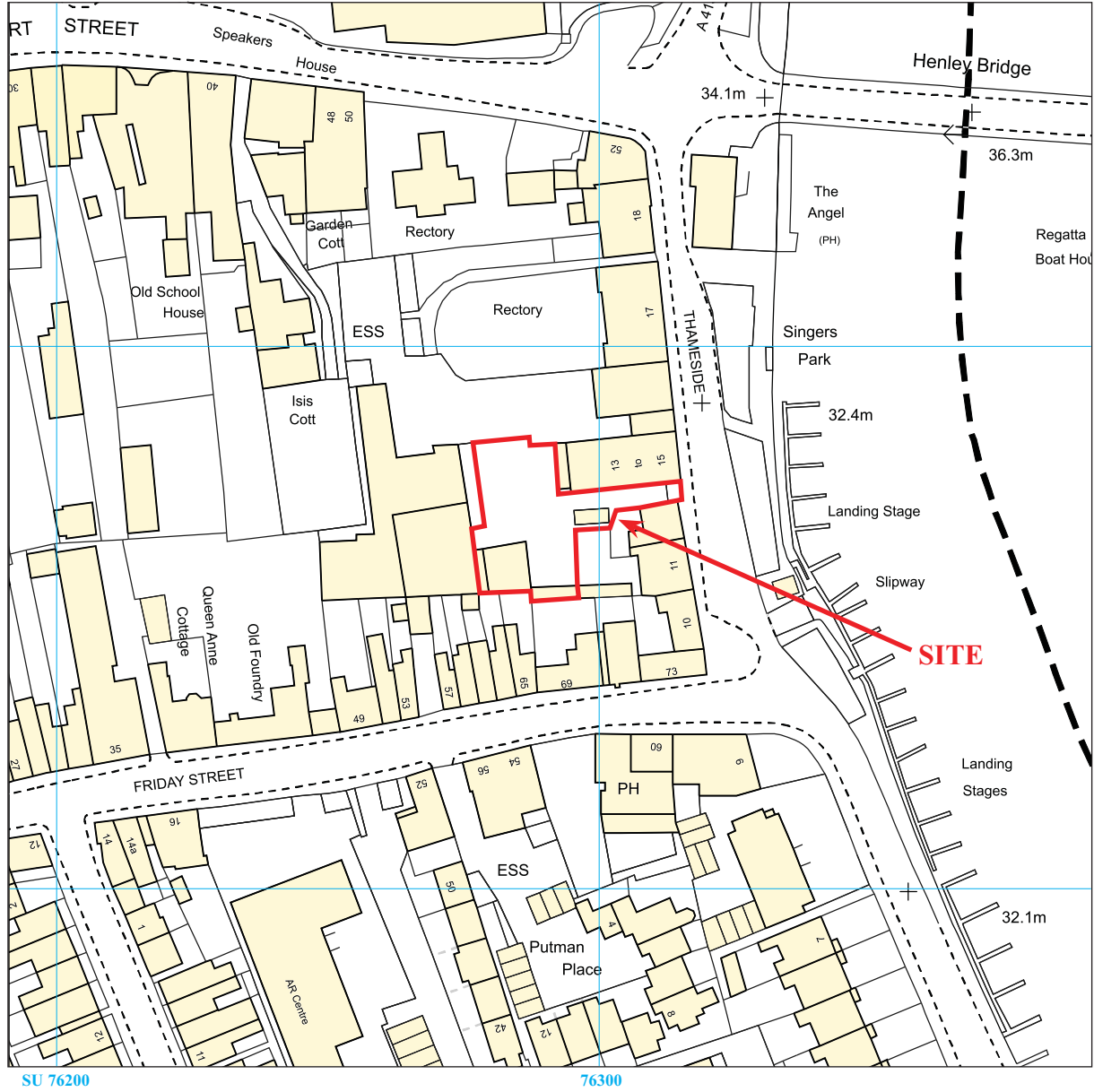


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Figure 1. Location of site in the Oxfordshire

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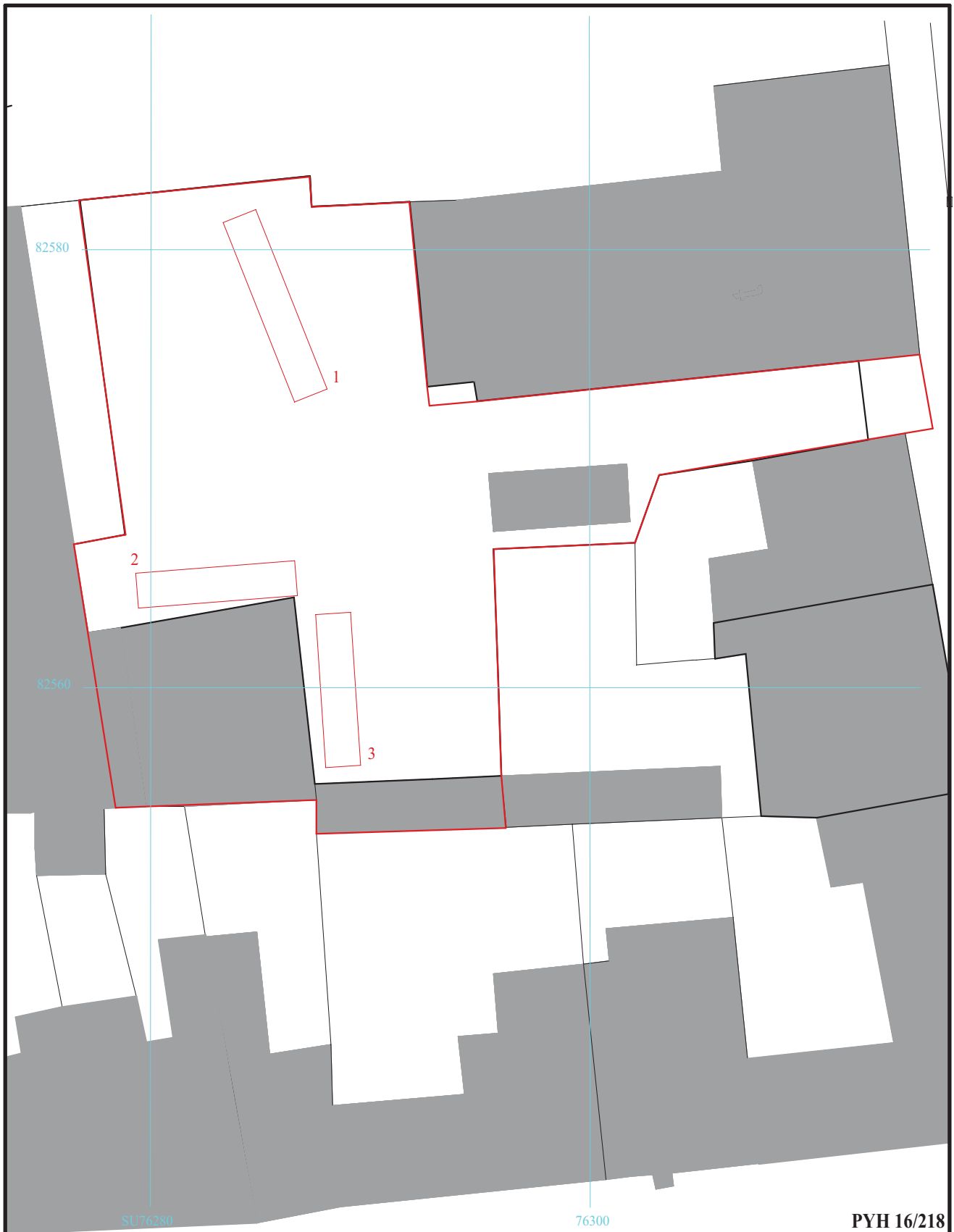


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Thameside.

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Figure 3. Plan showing evaluation trench locations.



Trench 1

S _____ N 32.60 m
Made ground

Back fill (concrete, rebar)

Base of trench

Trench 2

W _____ E 32.7 m

Tarmac

Made ground

Made ground (modern bricks)

Base of trench

Brown/grey gravel (natural geology) (in test pit)

Trench 3

S _____ N 33.13 m

Concrete

Made ground

Made ground (rubble, clay)

Subsoil (silty-clay)

Base of trench
Brown/grey gravel (natural geology)

PYH 16/218

**Parrotts Yard, 15 Thameside, Henley-on-Thames,
Oxfordshire, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Trench sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking east,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, test pit looking south, Scale: 2m.



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking north, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

PYH 16/218

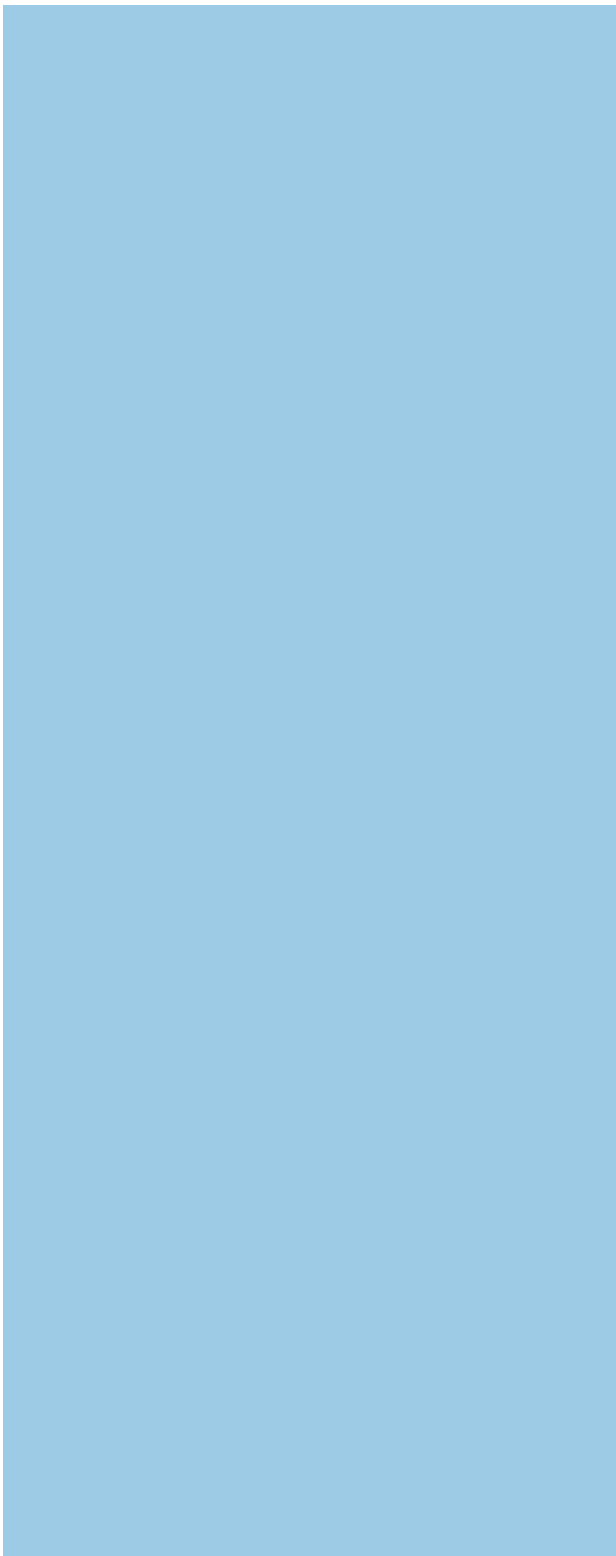
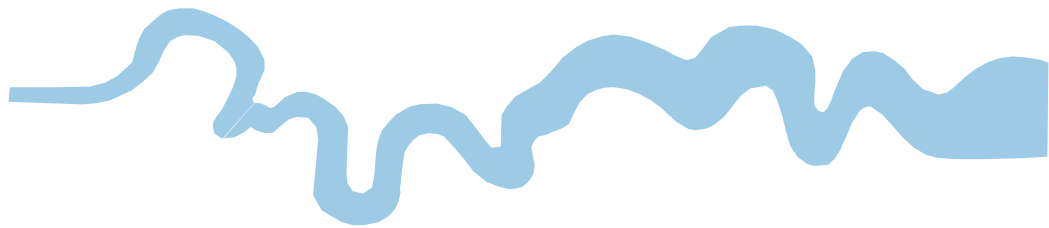
**Parrotts Yard, 15 Thameside, Henley-on-Thames,
Oxfordshire, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 3.**

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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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