

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**70 Watling Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames,  
Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Andrew Muddin**

**Site Code: WLD 17/205**

**(SU 5776 9392)**

**70 Watling Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames,  
Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Ms J Ford**

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WLD 17/205

**October 2017**

## Summary

**Site name:** 70 Watling Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 5776 9392

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Munding

**Site code:** WLD 17/205

**Area of site:** c.10 sq m

**Summary of results:** Due to structural problems to the existing bungalow, the bays of the property are to be replaced with a new front wall. An extension footing was excavated next to the bays in line with the current roof line. No archaeological deposits or finds were revealed.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 04.10.17 Steve Preston ✓ 04.10.17
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# 70 Watling Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Report 17/205

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at No.70 Watling Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, OX10 7JQ (SU 5776 9392) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Joanna Ford, the home owner.

Planning permission (16/S2732/HH) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a new front wall, to support the overhang of the roof, and remove the existing bays. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, the consent is subject to two conditions (3 and 4) requiring an archaeological watching brief is required to be maintained during 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, advisers to the District on matters pertaining to archaeology within the planning process. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin on the 3rd October 2017. The site code is WLD 17/205.

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 site is located in the south of Dorchester-on-Thames, to the south of Watling Lane (Fig. 2). This series of modern housing, along with Orchard Haven, Tenpenny and the housing south of Watling Lane, lies outside of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Roman walled town (SAM OX116). The site lies at a height of 48m above Ordnance Datum (OD) and the underlying geology is Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member that forms the First Terrace Gravels of the River Thames and floodplain (BGS 1980).

## Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location relating to the historic town of Dorchester, and in particular the remains of the later Roman walled town and post-Roman deposits (Saxon) which lie beneath the

allotments on the north side of Watling Lane (Booth *et al.* 2007), within a Scheduled area (OX116). To the south is also a Scheduled Monument, that of the Dyke Hills pre-Roman rampart earthworks (OX17). A number of archaeological investigations have been carried out at the southern end of the town, and although small, in recent times, follow on from the investigations of the extra-mural settlement (eg: Munby and Rodwell 1975, Burnham and Wachter 1990; Booth *et al.* 2007) that exists to the west, south and south-east of the town. A number of Roman cemeteries within the extra-mural settlement of the town have been located, with the most recent found to the south-east (Mundin 2008; Platt 2017). Cut features of pits and post-holes, especially of 1st century AD date, could relate to the site of a pre-town encampment, known to cover a large area to the south and south-east. Investigation on the south-western edge of Watling Lane did not find cut features, just deep deposits of upcast soil (Mundin 2012). Further small investigation at Tenpenny located a small collection of Roman pottery, but from similar, probably much later, dumped soil (Esteves and Mundin 2017).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits by the works. This involved the monitoring the area of intrusive excavation (during the break up of the Tarmacadam drive) and the excavation of the new footing trenches. All trenching was undertaken by hand.

## **Results**

Observations were undertaken on the excavated trench at the front of the property (Fig. 3; Pl.1). Three areas were open around the existing bays that curved on the frontage. Tarmac was required to be broken through at all areas, which was 0.22m thick. The soil removed was homogeneous, a single, particularly thick layer of dark brown clayey silt, that reached the base of excavation. At the base, coarse gravel was exposed. The north-western excavation was 1.27m long (W-E) x 0.76m wide (N-S), the central dug area was 3.6m long (W-E) x 0.86m wide (N-S) and the north-eastern corner was 1.33m long (W-E) x 0.75m wide (N-S). The north-western corner was excavated to a depth of 0.86m deep. The central excavation was dug to 0.85m, and the north-eastern dig was 0.97m deep. No finds and no archaeological deposits were encountered.

## **Finds**

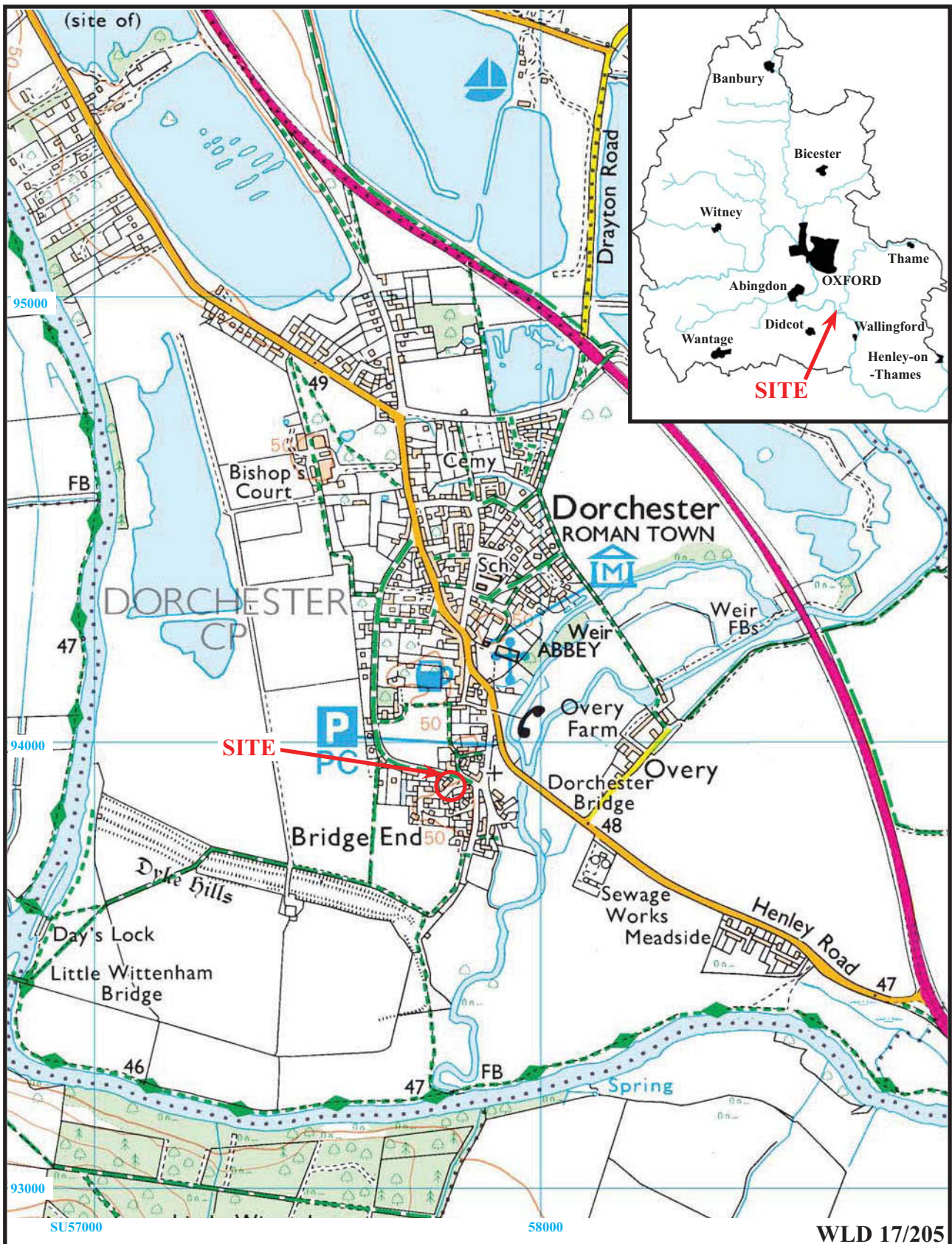
No finds, even of modern date, were encountered in the deposits uncovered.

## Conclusion

No cut features were encountered during the works, nor any finds of interest. The area observed consisted entirely of made ground (presumably modern) which overlay the natural gravel.

## References

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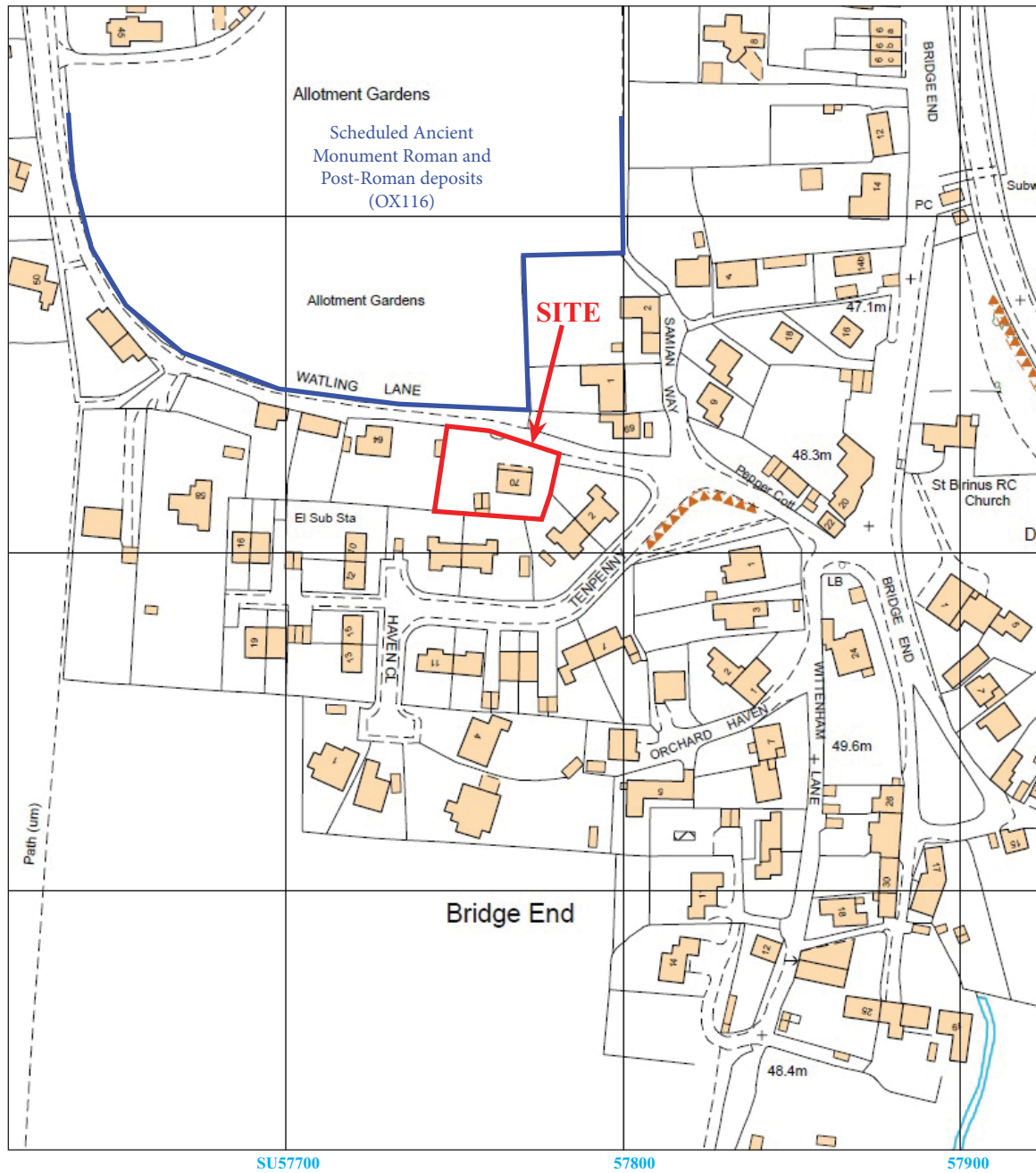
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Figure 1. Location of site within Dorchester-on-Thames and Oxfordshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site in south of Dorchester.

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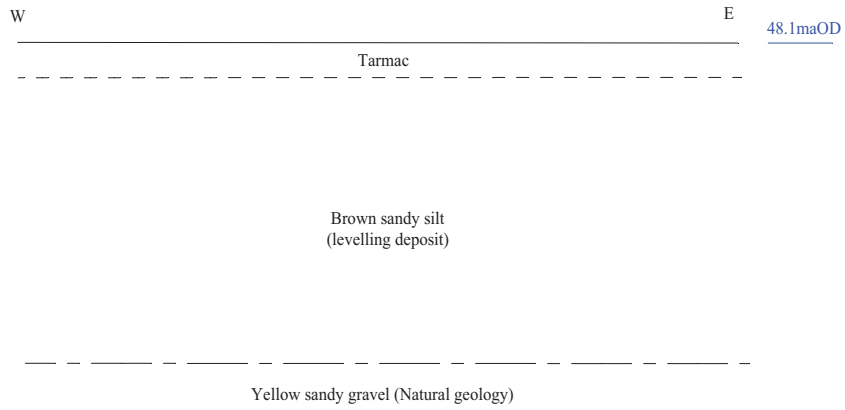


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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. New footing, looking east, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Representative section, central excavation (under front entrance), looking south,  
Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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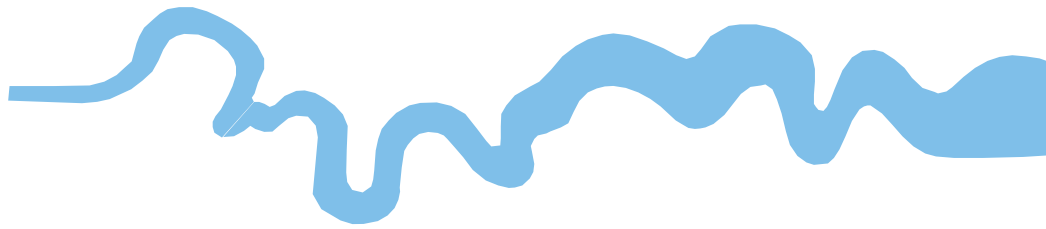
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Plates 1 and 2.

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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
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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