

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**47 St John's Road, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Pierre Manisse

Site Code: SJW19/86

(SU 60446 89081)

**47 St John's Road, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Ms Antonia Everett

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SJW 19/86

September 2019

Summary

Site name: 47 St John's Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 60446 89081

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 9th September 2019

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site code: SJW 19/86

Area of site: 16 sq m

Summary of results: Despite the close proximity of a known Saxon cemetery, monitoring of the excavation of a foundation trench for a southern extension to the property revealed no deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 12.09.19 Steve Preston ✓ 12.09.19

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An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Report 19/86

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 47 St John's Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (centred on SU 60446 89081) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr and Ms Everett, 17 Reading Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 9NS.

Planning consent (P19/S0791/HH) has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council for the erection of a two-storey rear extension. The consent is subject to two conditions pertaining to archaeology (6 and 7) which require the implementation of a programme of archaeological monitoring, in this instance an archaeological watching brief, during the course of the groundworks that could affect below ground archaeological deposits.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was in accordance with a written specification, based on a briefing noted issued by Mr Richard Oram Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, the archaeological adviser to the District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Pierre-Damien Manisse on 9th September 2019. The site code is SJW 19/86.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located just south of the historic core of Wallingford, with the Kinecroft immediately to the north. It lies in a residential area on the south side of St Johns Road which developed in the 20th century. The new extensions is to the rear (south) of the property (Fig. 2 and 3). The site lies approximately at 49m above Ordnance Datum. It is a flat small backland area, with a concrete terrace and a garden. The underlying geology as recorded on maps (BGS 1980) is 1st (Flood Plain) Terrace Deposits belonging to younger river gravels of the Thames, which flows south some 450m to the east of the site.

Archaeological background

The site is located adjacent to St John's Primary School, and to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the town's Saxon Burh defences (SAM1006293). To the west of the site a group of early Saxon interments were found in excavations in the late 19th century and the 1930's, indicative of a cemetery group (Fig. 2). Material of early 5th-6th century date was found with the bodies, which includes beads, bone combs and two cruciform brooches (Leeds 1938). Though the evidence here is earlier than the *Burh*, it is accepted to be the first evidence of early Saxon settlement in the town but the nature of this settlement remains undetermined (Blair 1994, 9; Christie and Hamerow 2013, 63).

The extent of the cemetery is not known, though the most westerly remains were found during excavations during construction of the school in 1910. Though this current site could be deemed to be east of the cemetery there is a high potential for further human remains to be encountered. A more recent excavation at the School found an urned cremation, radiocarbon dated as Early Saxon and two other (undated but presumed contemporary) inhumations of infants (Anthony and Ford 2012, 47).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. Any intrusive action that could cause a possible disturbance for below ground archaeological remains was to be constantly monitored: in essence this involved the excavation of a single footing trench at the rear of the house. The spoil heap was also to be checked to enhance finds recovery.

Results (Fig.2; Pl. 1-2)

The foundation trench was laid out as intended and encompasses an area 3.5 x 4.35m (Fig. 3; Pl. 1). A 360° tracked excavator was used. It was equipped with a ditching bucket, 0.60m wide. On arrival the existing concrete terrace had already been demolished and its rubble removed. The trench was generally 1m deep.

The lowest deposit encountered was the upper geology (52), a yellowish brown sand and gravel that matches the BGS map description, at around 1m below modern ground level (Fig. 4). Above this was subsoil (51), a 0.30m thick deposit of mid brown sandy silt. It was overlaid by up to 0.60m of buried topsoil (50), a very dark brown soft silt, homogeneous, with very rare small limestones (<0.10m). Where preserved, the topsoil was below a 0.10m thick concrete layer (Pl. 2).

No archaeological features or finds were observed, only modern drainage was seen, truncating the topsoil.

Finds

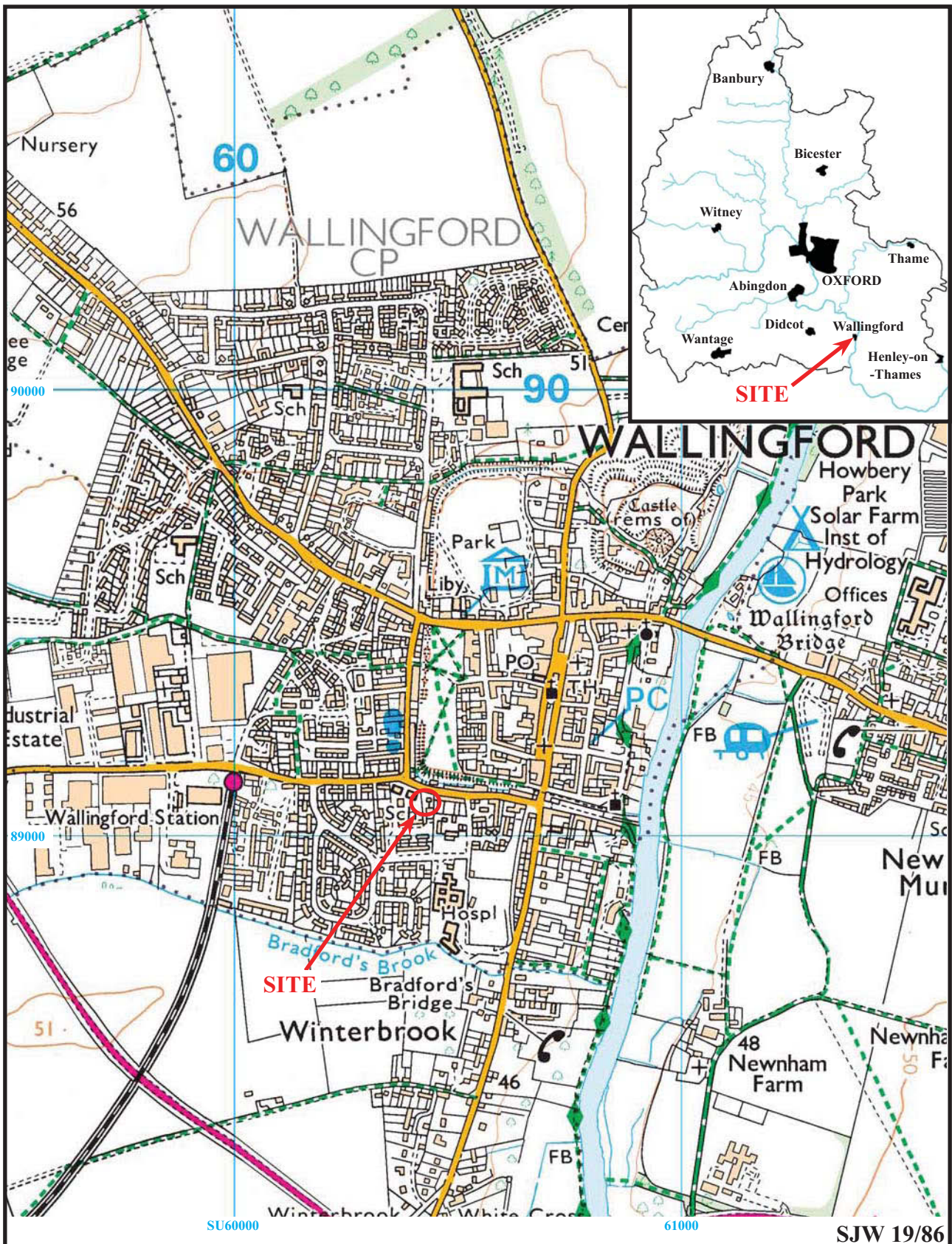
No finds of any archaeological interest were collected.

Conclusion

Despite the close proximity of the early Anglo-Saxon burial ground to the west, no features or finds of any archaeological interest were observed during this watching brief. This could either be due to the limited impact of the footing's footprint or because the cemetery does not extend this far east.

References

- Anthony, S. and Ford, S., 2012, 'An early Anglo-Saxon urned cremation burial and an infant grave in a medieval ditch at St John's Primary School, in S Preston, *Archaeological Investigations in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, 1992-2010*, TVAS Monogr **10**, Reading, 39-48
- Blair, J, 1994, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, Stroud
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- CIfA, 2014, *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading
- Christie, N and Hamerow, H, 2013, 'Wallingford before the Burh', in N Christie, O Crieghton and M Edgeworth, *Transforming Townscapes: From burh to borough: the archaeology of Wallingford AD800-1400*, Soc Medieval Archaeol Monogr **35**, London, 45–65
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wallingford and Oxfordshire.

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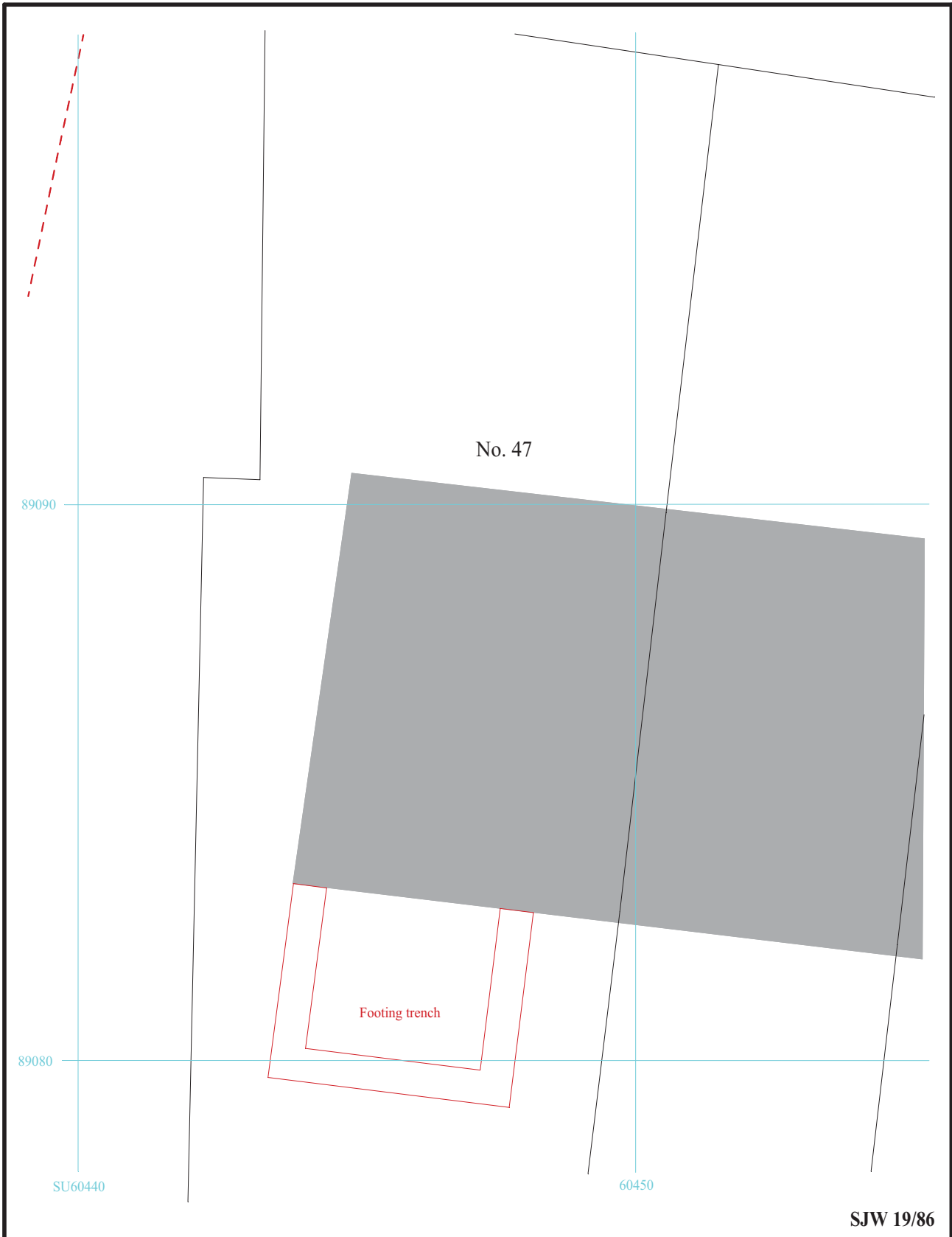
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Figure 2. Location of site showing nearby archaeological sites.



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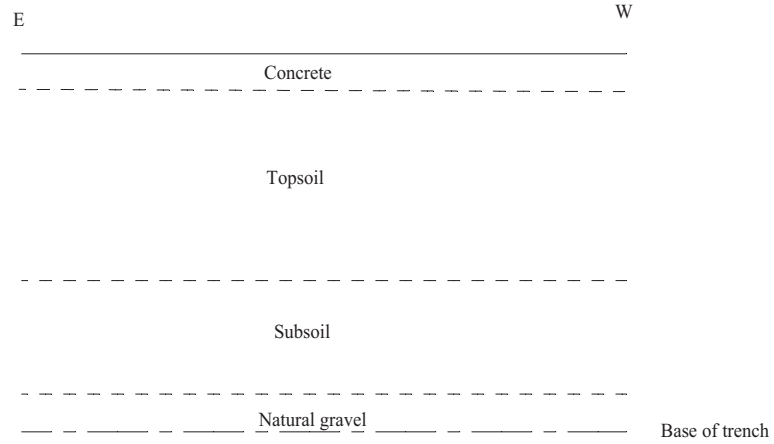


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Figure 3. Observed footing.



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. General view of the trench, looking north-west, Scales: 1m x2.



Plate 2. Representative section, looking east, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

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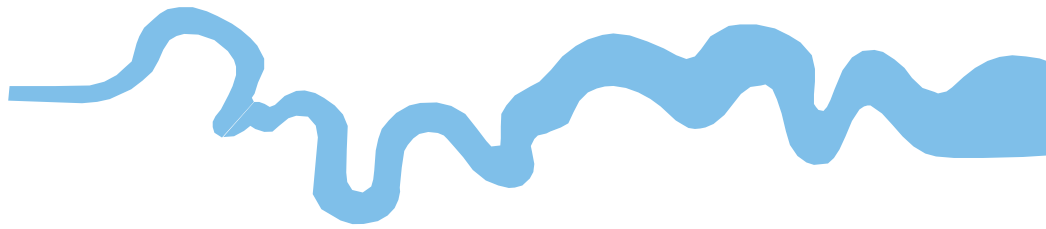
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**

*Offices in:
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent and Ennis (Ireland)*