

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**The former Big Cheese Public House,
128-130 West End Road, Southampton**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Anne Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site Code: BCS20/44

(SU 4536 1366)

The Former Big Cheese, 128-130 West End Road, Southampton, Hampshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Imperial Homes Southern**

by Anne Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BCS 20/44

August 2020

Summary

Site name: 128-130 West End Road, Southampton

Grid reference: SU 4536 1366

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project:

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Will Attard, Anne Huvig, Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site code: BCS 20/44

Summary of results: A watching brief was conducted during the initial demolition of the former public house and subsequently during the excavation of footings and services trenches. The only artefacts pre-dating the 'Big Cheese' were some unstratified 19th-20th century pottery. A single wall was observed that pre-date the 'Big Cheese' and probably belonged to the early 20th century 'Bittern Brewery' public house that stood on the site..

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Southampton City Museum in due course, with accession code SOU 1860.

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	Steve Preston ✓ 26.08.20

The Former Big Cheese, 128-130 West End Road, Southampton An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Anne Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse

Report 20/44

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the former public house “Big Cheese”, located at the junction of West End Road and Dean Road, Southampton, SO18 6PH (centred on SU 45365 13667) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Paine, director of Imperial Homes Southern, Paddock View, Calcot Mount Business Park, Calcot Lane, Curbridge, Southampton, SO32 2BN.

Planning permission (10/00346/FUL) was granted by Southampton City Council for the erection of ten 2-storey dwellings and associated landscaping and infrastructure. Some conditions pertaining to archaeology were attached. The permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government’s *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the City Council’s policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by the local planning archaeologist, Ms Ingrid Peckham. The fieldwork was undertaken by Will Attard, Anne Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse, between 17th April /2020 and the 25th June 2020. The site code BCS 20/44.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Southampton City Museum in due course, with accession code SOU1860.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at 128 West end Road, just before its junction with Dean Road in the parish of West End, Southampton, Hampshire. It is an irregular flat plot of land, about 2300 sq. m.. It was formerly occupied by a public house with a Tarmacadamed car park and some garden at its back. The site is surrounded to the south-west and south-east by residential properties and north-east by a retail store (Fig. 2). At the time of the visit the above ground building had been demolished. The underlying geology (BGS 1987) was 8th river terrace deposit of sand and gravel. The site lies at approximately 59m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The Archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in briefing documents prepared by the Southampton City Archaeological officer. In summary the site lies within a “Local Area of Archaeological Potential” as defined in the City of Southampton Core Strategy (2010). A ‘Roman Medallion’ (coin?) was reported from near the site along with other finds, including worked flints and other prehistoric or Roman artefacts, in a wider area both to the north-west (Bittern Park, Midanbury) and south (Bitterne). In the 19th C. a brewery was established, on the site (the Bitterne Brewery), which continued to operate until before the First World War. It was demolished in 1926, with only a public house left. Damaged heavily during the Second World War, a new building was constructed in 1952. Prior to demolition the public house was photographically recorded (Elliott, 2020).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to:

- Determine the presence or absence of human use of the area, and the date, state of preservation and extent of that use; recover associated artefacts and record evidence
- Identify and record any natural deposit (nature, dimension, relation) and evaluate their potential to contain or conceal any archaeological remains, particularly from the prehistoric period.

More specifically, this project will put a particular focus on any archaeological evidence pre-dating 1850 but also aims at documenting the former brewery or any building prior to the modern set-up of the public house.

Any intrusive groundwork (ground reduction, foundation trenches, etc.) was to be archaeologically monitored and any exposed archaeology recorded and, if threatened by the development would be hand excavated. Spoilheaps were to be monitored and a metal detector will be used to enhance finds recovery.

Results

Demolition phase (Pl. 1)

Following demolition to ground level, the removal of the underground component, a cellar and its concrete footings was monitored. Only made ground was observed with no trace of the earlier brewery nor initial public house observed. The natural geological horizon was reached, at about 0.75-0.90m below ground level, This consisted of various deposits of sand and gravel down to a maximum of 1.90m deep. During the demolition process a discrete area of rubble containing unfrosted bricks was observed. These bricks likely represent an

earlier phase of construction on the site. The presence of a possible brick-lined well (**PI. 2**) was also noted but not seen further during the foundation trenching.

Footings

The foundation works comprised footings for three blocks (Figs. 3 and 4) : block 1 at south, block 2 at west, and block 3 at north. The demolition had deeply impacted most of the areas of block 2 and 3. The footings for all blocks were 0.70-0.80m wide.

Block 1(PI. 3)

In the area covered by block 1, and its surrounds, ground reduction had occurred. The uppermost layer of demolition material and garden soil, up to 0.40m thick, was removed to level the site. This stripped surface did not reveal the natural geology nor any deposits of archaeological interest.

Block 1 formed a rectangular area 15.50m x 9.90m, with two intermediary dividers. The trench depth varied from 1.10 to 1.30m deep at south (where original ground was preserved) down to only 0.60-0.75m deep at north (where demolition had already taken place). Up to 0.50m of a soft dark brownish-grey silt with occasional gravels or pebbles topsoil was overlaying a transitory layer or subsoil. This deposit was up to 0.20m thick. The subsoil was a mid brown/dark brownish-grey or orangey-grey silt with frequent gravels or pebbles and roots noted throughout. Below this layer was a brownish-yellow sand and gravel natural geology.

Block 2

Block 2 was 10m x 10.60m, divided into two equal parts. More than half of its footprint had been disturbed during the demolition phase. In the northern trench, towards the road, several modern services were observed. The trenches were 1.30-1.40m deep. The stratigraphy revealed was 0.08m of Tarmac above 0.25m of brown/yellow sandy gravel make-up layer . In the north-west corner it overlaid on older Tarmac surface, 0.05m thick and its preparatory levelling layer (0.12m of brown and yellow sandy gravel). Elsewhere it directly overlaid 0.25m of subsoil, a light grey and mid brownish-grey sandy gravel, with rare inclusions of brick fragments. Beneath was the natural sand and gravel geology. Among the unstratified finds observed during the excavation of footings of block 2, were a complete white stoneware bottle and a Bovril glass bottle.

Block 3

The third block was composed of a 10x10m square footing (divided in two) and a slightly offset 10x15.40m rectangular block divided in three. The south-west part of it had been impacted by the demolition. The rest showed a similar stratigraphy as in block 2 with Tarmac, levelling layers, subsoil and geology except at the north-east where the Tarmac was laid on a 0.10-0.15m thick base of concrete slabs. Here the trenches dug went deeper than the previous two blocks, reaching 1.70m below ground level. The natural geology was recorded at 0.80m below ground level. On the north side of this block a North west- south east orientated red brick wall was observed, (52) (PI. 4), that likely bends to the north west. This wall was not seen in section towards the road side to the North west. It could be a remnant of an earlier phase of the public house. The subsoil and geology, within that corner delimited by the wall, had been replaced by rubble, (53), made of brick fragments, slates and ceramic pipe. The red brick wall was 0.24m thick and survived to 1.06m high, consisting of two rows of bricks side by side. It appears immediately below the Tarmac levelling layer. The bricks were bonded with a light yellow/white sandy lime mortar.

Services

Once the concrete had been poured in the footings, the digging of the services was monitored. The services were focused on blocks 1 and 2. As it dealt with the area closest to the road and existing services, the area had already been vastly disturbed by modern works. The depth of the services trench varied between 0.40 to 1m, barely reaching the geological horizon. Though no continuation of wall 52 was seen, the rubble 53 extended further north. The service trenches were 0.60m wide. No archaeology was seen.

Finds

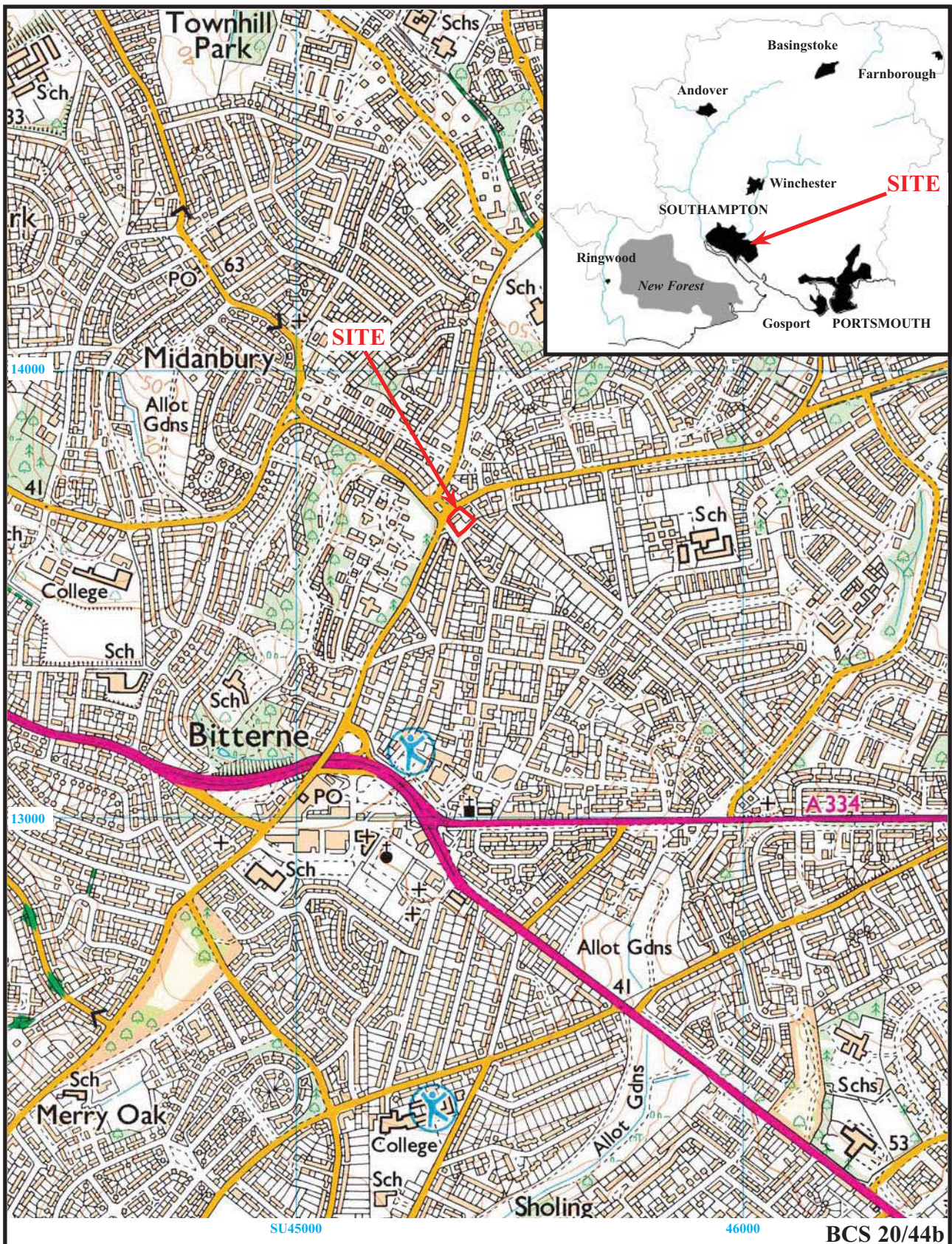
The only artefacts noted were unstratified and of late post-medieval to modern date. They were retained on site.

Conclusion

No deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the watching brief. One segment of wall was noted that probably represents the remains of the early 20th century 'Bittern Brewery' public house on the site but all other traces pre-dating the 1950s structure seem to have been removed.

References

- BGS, 1987, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 315, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Elliott, G, 2020, The Former Big Cheese, Public House, West End Road, Southampton, Building Recording, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 20/44, Reading
- NPPF, 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework* (revised), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London



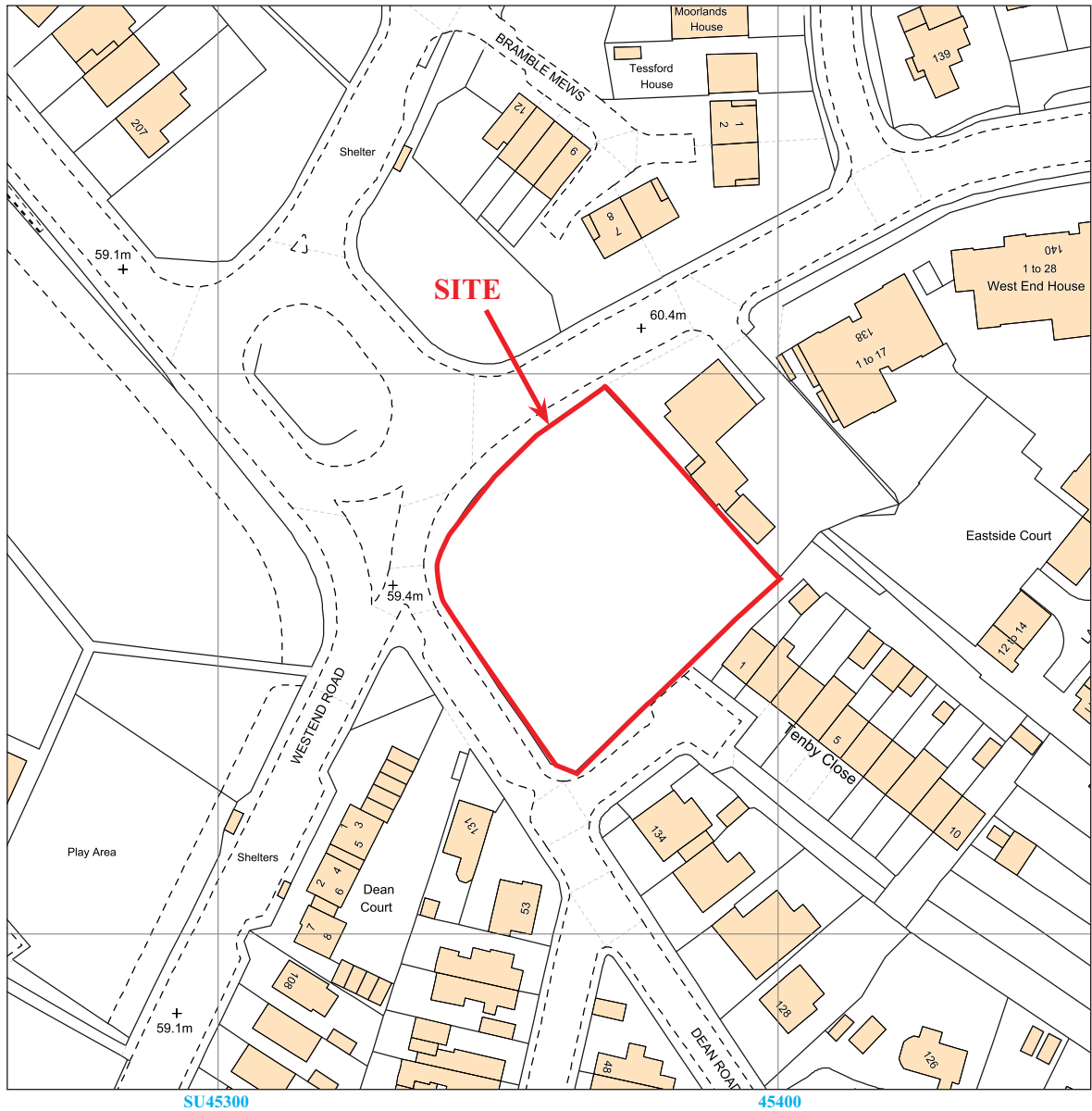
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Figure 1. Location of site within Southampton and
Hampshire.

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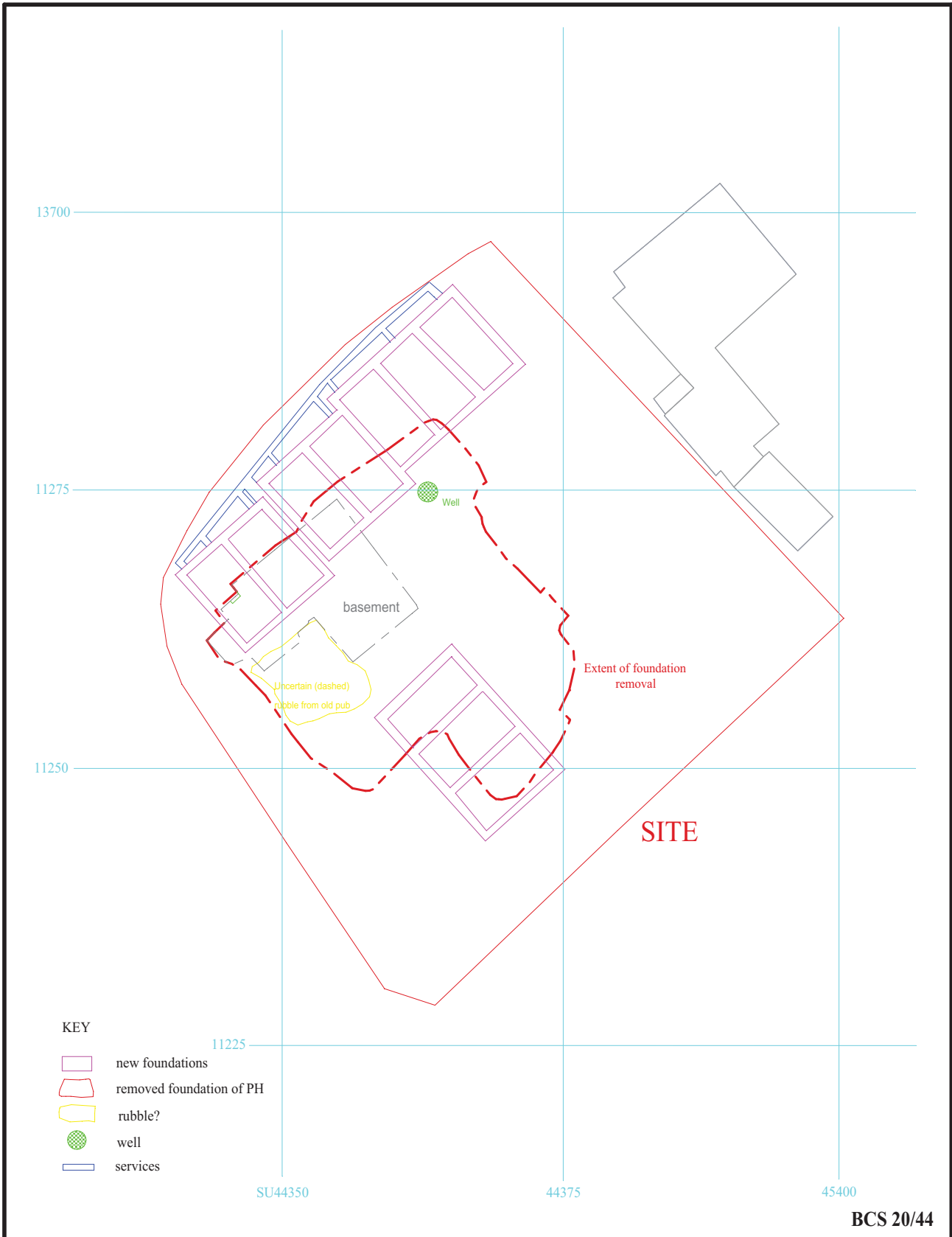
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Westend Road.

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas,



Block 2

Tarmac

made ground (sandy gravel)

Subsoil (grey/brown sandy gravel with rare brickfragments)

Natural geology (sand, gravel)

Base of trench

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Figure 4. Representative footing section



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Plate 1. Exposed ground section, behind basement wall, looking North, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Brick-built well, looking south east, Scales: 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 1. Foundation trenches of block 1, looking North East, Scales: 2x1m.



Plate 2. Brick wall 52, looking South, Scales: 2x1m.

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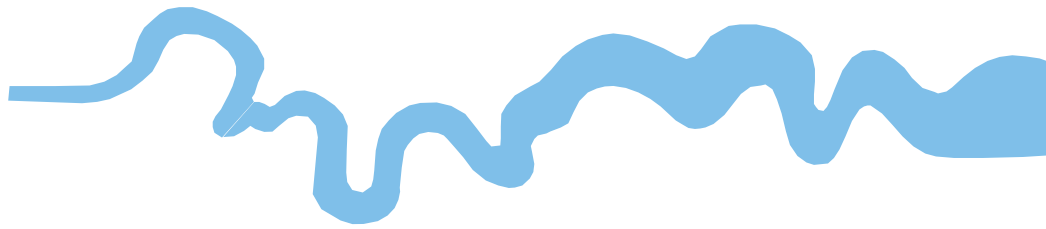
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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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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