

**Rear of 21 Charnham Street,
Hungerford, West Berkshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Graham Hallett

by James Lewis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CSH08/64

July 2008

Summary

Site name: Rear of 21 Charnham Street, Hungerford, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 3396 6894

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 28th – 30th May 2008

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James Lewis and James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: CSH08/64

Area of site: c. 90 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological features or deposits were identified

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

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Report 08/64

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land at the rear of 21 Charnham Street, Hungerford, West Berkshire (SU 3396 6894) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Graham Hallett, Oaklands Cottage, Titcombe, Hungerford, Berkshire, RG17 9SZ.

Planning consent (06/00131/REM) has been granted by West Berkshire Council for the construction of new houses to the rear of 21 Charnham Street, Hungerford. Due to the location of the site within historic Hungerford, whose origins lie in late Saxon times, the consent is subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a watching brief during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the West Berkshire Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Duncan Coe, Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis and James McNicoll-Norbury between the 28th and 30th May 2008, and the site code is CSH08/64.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at the West Berkshire Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at the northern edge of Hungerford (SU 3396 6894) (Fig. 1) on land bounded by the River Kennet to the north and River Dun to the south, close to these rivers' confluence. This land has been built on and the site is surrounded by buildings; a modern development immediately to the north and the older more historic buildings to the south which line Charnham Street (Fig. 2). The site is mapped as lying on alluvium (BGS 1947) and is at an elevation of *c.*95m Ordnance Datum. Both rivers are much braided in this area and there are numerous channels to both; the Dun is canalized.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems its location within the Charnham suburb of historic Hungerford (Astill 1978; Ford 2002). The town has its origins in late Saxon times and in the medieval period Charnham was developing as a suburb. Fieldwork to the north of the site revealed evidence for multi-period use of this riverine landscape, from the Mesolithic period onwards. Most of the features here, however, related to medieval farms and farmland with post-medieval use of low-lying ground as water meadows (Ford 2002). However a watching brief to the west along Charnham Street did not reveal any finds or deposits of archaeological interest. (Anthony 2004). The site is located in what is considered to be the rear of the medieval burgage plots.

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the project are to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work. In general this is to involve examination of areas of topsoil stripping, landscaping, ground reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations and services as necessary.

The specific research aims of this project were:

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;

To determine if any deposits are present relating to use of the area in late Saxon or medieval times.

Results

The foundations for the new building comprised traditional strip foundations and these were observed and recorded. The foundations were 0.60m wide and 1.10m deep (Fig. 3). The stratigraphy of the site varied slightly across the site. Parts of the upper levels consisted either of a mixed demolition/construction mat or topsoil, which was 0.10m thick. Below this was a compact dark silty clay that was 0.50m thick and which contained some fragments of brick and tile (not retained). In turn this overlay grey clay, 0.40m thick, interpreted as alluvium. Beneath this was a green grey clay that was exposed for at least 0.10m to the base of the footings. This latter deposit was calcareous in places (Fig. 4). No archaeological features were observed.

Finds

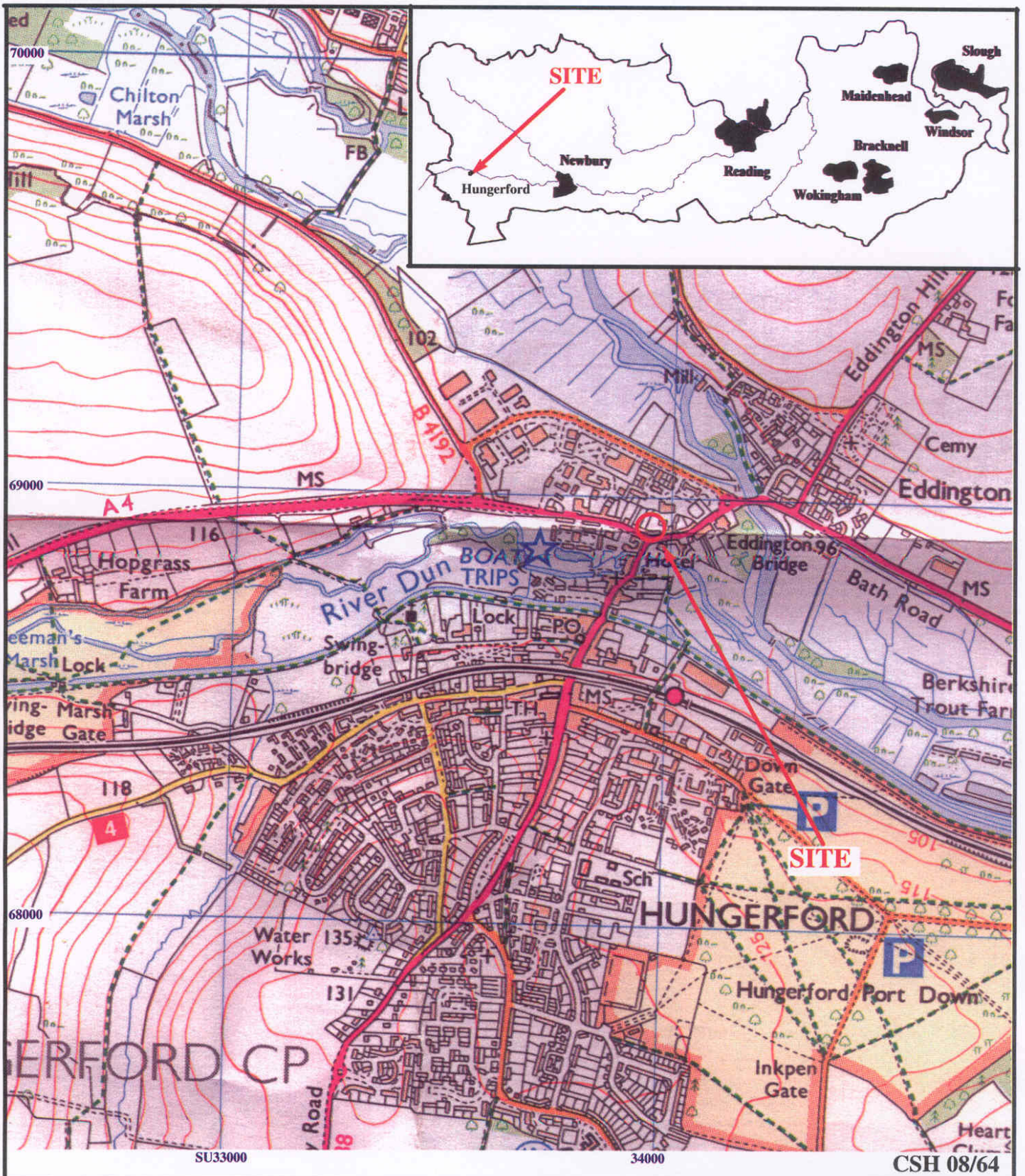
No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite the site lying within an area considered to have been occupied by burgage plots of the medieval town suburb, and therefore the potential of the site to contain archaeological features and deposits, nothing of archaeological interest of dating to the medieval period or before, was found.

References

- Anthony, S, 2004, 38 Charnham Street, Hungerford, Berkshire, an archaeological watching brief, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 03/22, Reading
- Astill, G G, 1978, *Historic towns in Berkshire; an archaeological appraisal*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 2 Reading
- BGS, 1947, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000 Sheet 267, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 2002, *Charnham Lane, Hungerford, Berkshire, archaeological investigations 1988–97*, TVAS monogr 1, Reading
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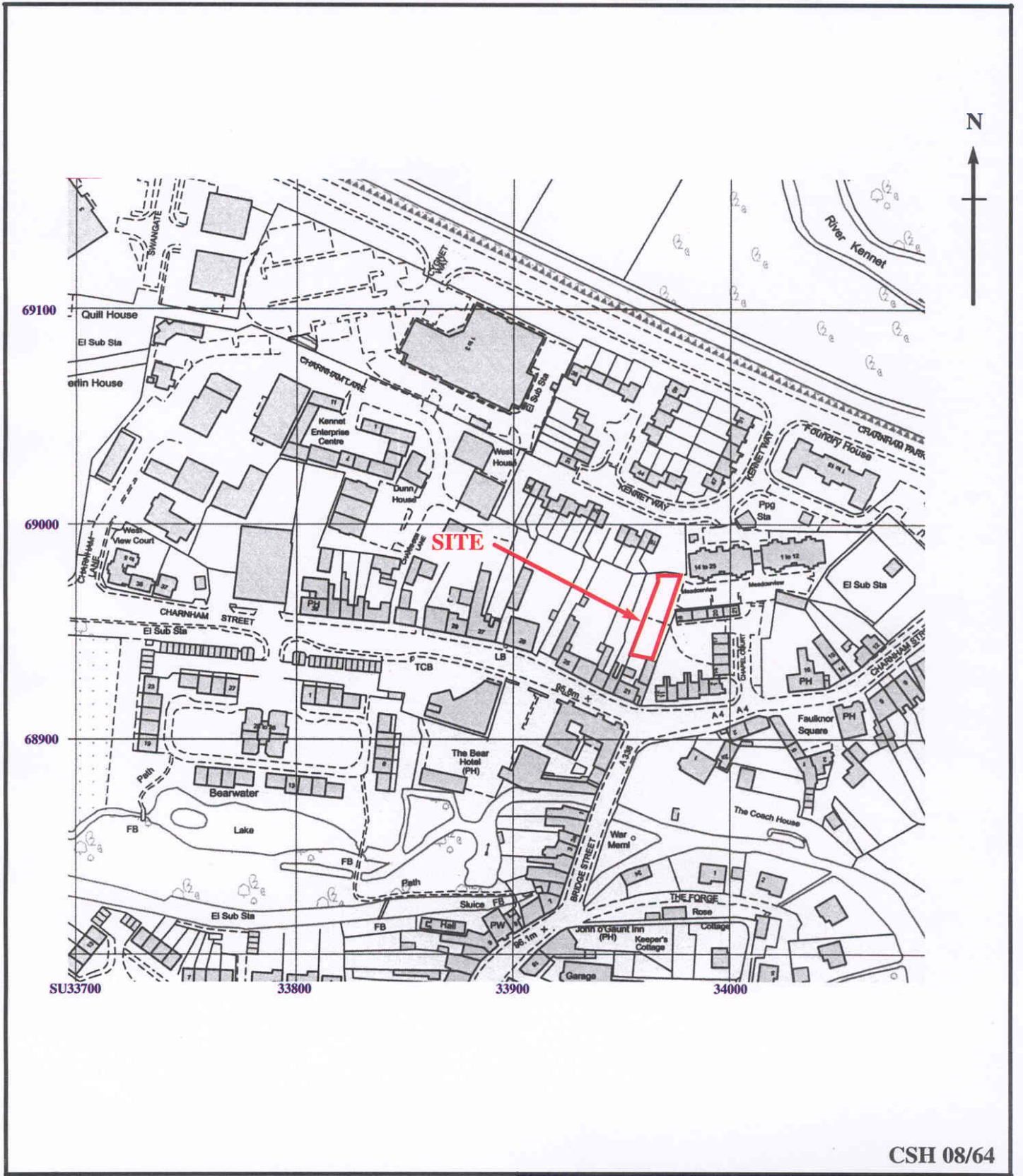


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Figure 1. Location of sites within Hungerford
and West Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site in Hungerford.

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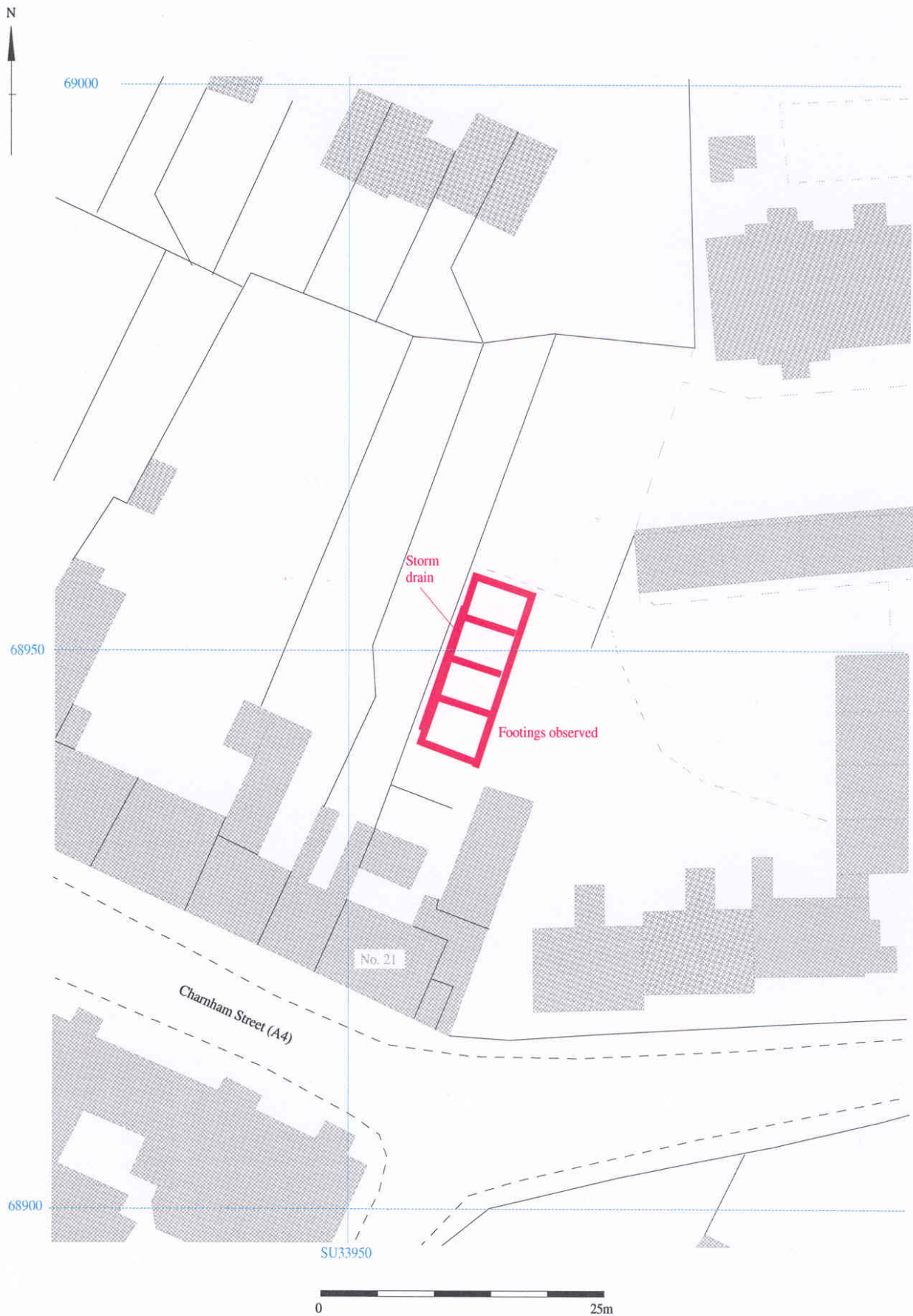


Figure 3. Location of areas observed during watching brief.

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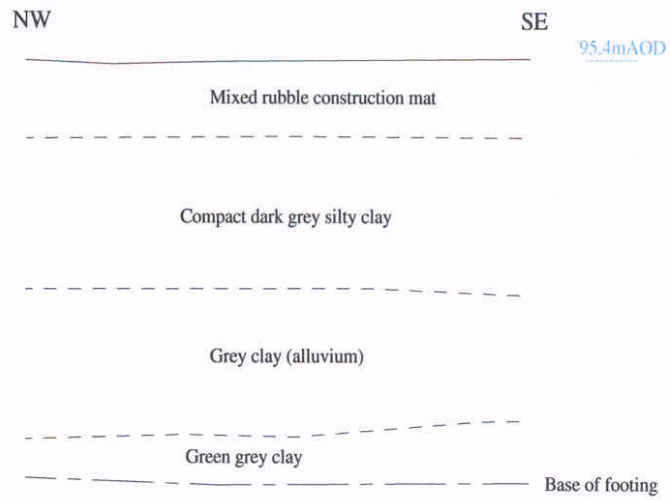


Figure 4. Representative section.