

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**2 St Peter's Road,
Wolvercote, Oxford**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Mundin

Site Code: PRW20/211

(SP 4967 0978)

2 St Peter's Road, Wolvercote, Oxford

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Mr N Kotak**

by Jon Tierney and Andrew Muddin
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PRW 20/212

April 2022

Summary

Site name: 2 St Peter's Road, Wolvercote, Oxford

Grid reference: SP 4967 0978

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 24th January – 6th April 2022

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Jon Tierney, Andrew Munding

Site code: PRW 20/212

Area of site: c. 350 sq m

Summary of results: The watching brief was successfully undertaken, with two ditches uncovered. An extension of the ditch identified in the previous evaluation continued at the north of the site, but no more was observed of a second ditch to the south, on a broadly similar alignment. Both had contained pottery of Iron Age date in the evaluation. A short stretch of possible ditch in the south-east corner of the footings observed did not appear to be on the same alignment as the southern ditch seen in the evaluation, and contained limestone blocks also not seen in the earlier features. It may have been a wall foundation. This remained undated and may not be related to the Iron Age ditches.

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 ✓ 22.04x.22 Steve Preston ✓ 21.04.22
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2 St Peter's Road, Wolvercote, Oxford An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Jon Tierney and Andrew Muddin

Report 20/212b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 2 St. Peter's Road, Wolvercote, Oxford, OX2 8AX (SP 4967 0978) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr N Kotak, of 2 Ryder Close, Yarnton, Oxfordshire, OX5 1UW.

Planning permission (app 20/01118/FUL) has been gained from Oxford City Council for new development adjacent to the junction of St Peter's Road and First Turn in Wolvercote, Oxford. The consent is subject to conditions (4 and 5) relating to archaeology that require a programme of archaeological work. After an evaluation located archaeological deposits on the site (Colyer 2022), the impact of the development required mitigation in the form of a watching brief, reported here. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the Council's policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, City Archaeologist for Oxford City Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Jon Tierney and Andrew Muddin between 24th January and 6th April 2022. The site code is PRW 20/212. The evaluation had also included one area of mitigation during the removal of the internal footings of the previous building.

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 a rectangular parcel of land located in Wolvercote at the north-eastern edge of Oxford (Fig 1). The River Thames lies west of Wolvercote (Fig. 2). The site lies at the junction of First Turn and St Peter's Road, near the local church and school. The geology of the site is recorded as Summertown-Radley Sand and Gravel Member (2nd Terrace Gravel) (BGS 1982) with the natural geology on the site observed and described as a brownish yellow sandy gravel. The site is c.67m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location in the historic centre of Wolvercote, and had been confirmed in the evaluation (Colyer 2022). Wolvercote has been referenced since the time of Domesday Book

(AD1086), and the historic core of the settlement is presumed to be close to the local parish church. This core largely developed to its current extent during the Victorian period, and although the church also was rebuilt after 1860, it retains elements of 14th and 15th century date (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974).

Elsewhere, recent development at Wolvercote Mill has located both poorly dated Iron Age features and Early Medieval features north of Mill Road (Mumford 2007; Mundin 2018; Hargreaves and Mundin 2019). The prehistoric potential, particularly stems from the proximity of known features on Port Meadow, covered by Scheduling to the south (Atkinson 1942; Dodd 2003, fig.2.1). Fieldwork projects on the floodplains and gravel terraces on the east side of the Thames have also identified other likely settlement sites with Iron Age enclosures and Roman finds in the vicinity (King 2008; Beckley and Radford 2012, 4).

The evaluation on the site (Colyer 2022) consisted of two trenches and was immediately followed by a 6.5m x 4.5m mitigation area immediately adjacent to Trench 2 (Fig. 3). The trenches both revealed archaeological features in the form of ditches containing Iron Age pottery and an undated posthole (besides Victorian and modern truncations). No further features were observed in the small area strip (Pl. 1).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the project were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved permanent monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks which, in this instance, involving reduction of overburden which occurred during removal of the existing footings and the excavation of new footing trenches.

All excavation was undertaken by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed bucket, though exposed surfaces and sections were defined by hand to record truncations of the natural gravel geology. All spoilheaps were inspected for finds. The excavated features (including those from the evaluation) are summarized in Appendix 1.

Results

Demolition

Following the evaluation, internal footings of the previous building were removed under archaeological supervision (Fig. 3). The natural geology was exposed beneath the previous footing in central parts of the site and the east boundary. No excavation exceeded 0.65m deep. The only features noted to cut the natural geology in the central part of the site contained clearly modern finds.

Footing excavations

Once that site had been cleared, the overall height of the site had been slightly reduced. On excavation of the footings, the recent levelling deposit laid down since the demolition was seen to be 0.25m thick. Removing this exposed dark grey brown homogenous made ground, with a mix of modern debris, brick, tile, plastic and metal from the previous demolition (60). In the north eastern footing trench fronting St Peters Road, this reached a depth of 0.74m deep and exposed the natural geology. Linear feature (6) was observed cutting the natural geology in the south east part of the footing (Figs 3 and 4). This contained a single fill of light grey brown firm clay (59), with large sub-rounded limestone blocks at the base of the cut (61) (Pl. 2). This feature was undated and was on a SW-NE axis perpendicular to the footing, its width 2.05m with its base extending beyond the limit of excavation. The footing was excavated to a depth of 1.3m deep.

Excavation of footings through the central and south parts of the site were recorded. These sections had only the modern levelling deposit covering the natural to a depth of 0.35m deep. Natural geology was exposed in section to the base of excavation. Both of the footings contained areas of modern truncation.

Excavation of the north footing corresponded with the north boundary of the site, just beyond previous demolition, and adjacent to the existing pavement. This footing was excavated to a depth of 0.9m. The projected axis of a ditch (4, 5) found in evaluation Trench 1 was set to cross this new footing trench at an oblique angle. On excavation the fill of a large feature was identified, its fill a dark brown sandy clay silt (58) identical to the fill seen in the evaluation (Pls 3 and 4). The feature extended beyond the limit of excavation. It was noted in the southern section of the trench, but its true width could not be established at this point, as it was truncated on its south-western side. The eastern edge was visible in section, facing south-east (Fig. 4). No further Iron Age finds were recovered.

Finds

Pottery

Seventeen sherds of pottery were recovered from ditch 5 in the evaluation and dated as Early to Middle Iron Age (Colyer 2022).

Conclusion

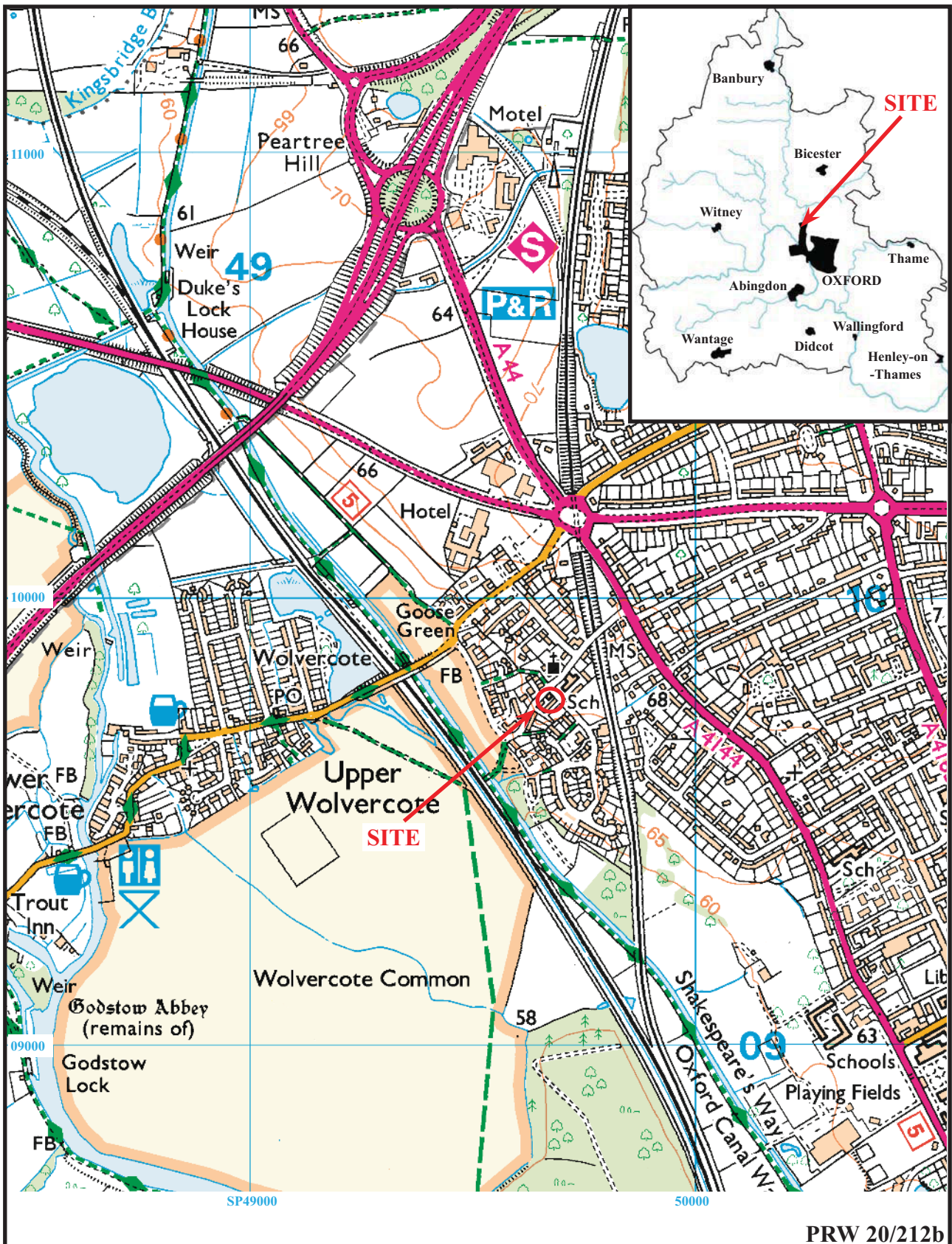
The watching brief has been successfully undertaken, with two ditches uncovered. An extension of the Iron Age ditch, previously identified in the evaluation, continued beyond the north of the site. At the south-east corner of the site was a linear feature on a different alignment from the ditch previously recorded and while it contained no finds it did contain large limestone blocks which may have been a wall foundation.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Feature details (including those from the evaluation)

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	52	Gully	Iron Age	Pottery
1	2	53-54	Posthole	-	
2	3	55	Ditch	Iron Age	Pottery
2	4	56-57	Ditch (same as 5)	Iron Age	Pottery
	5	58	Ditch (same as 4)	Iron Age	Pottery
		60	Levelling layer	Modern	Various finds
	6	59, 61	Foundation?	Undated	None



2 St Peter's Road, Wolvercote,
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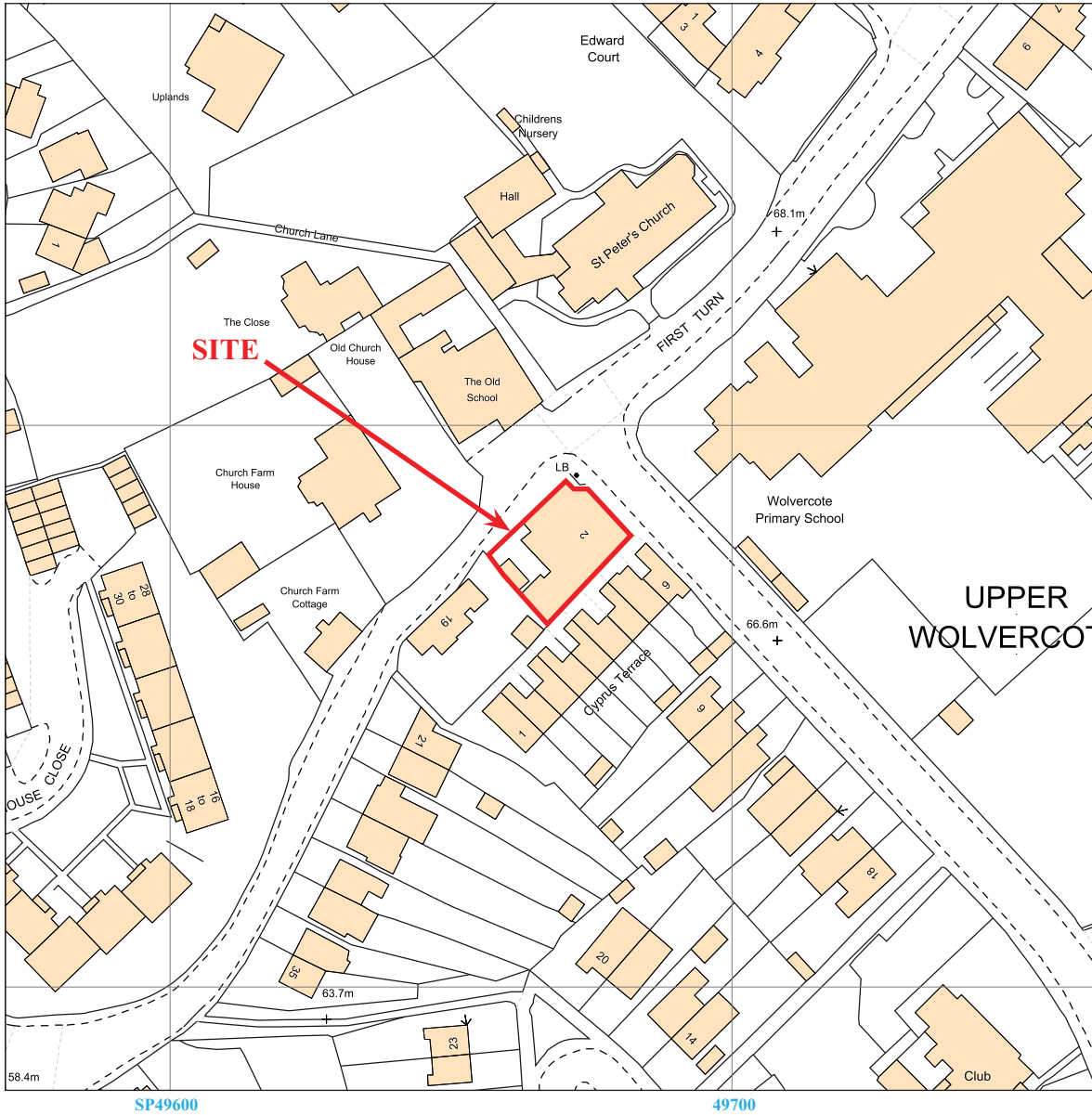
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wolvercote, Oxford and Oxfordshire.

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UPPER
WOLVERCOTE

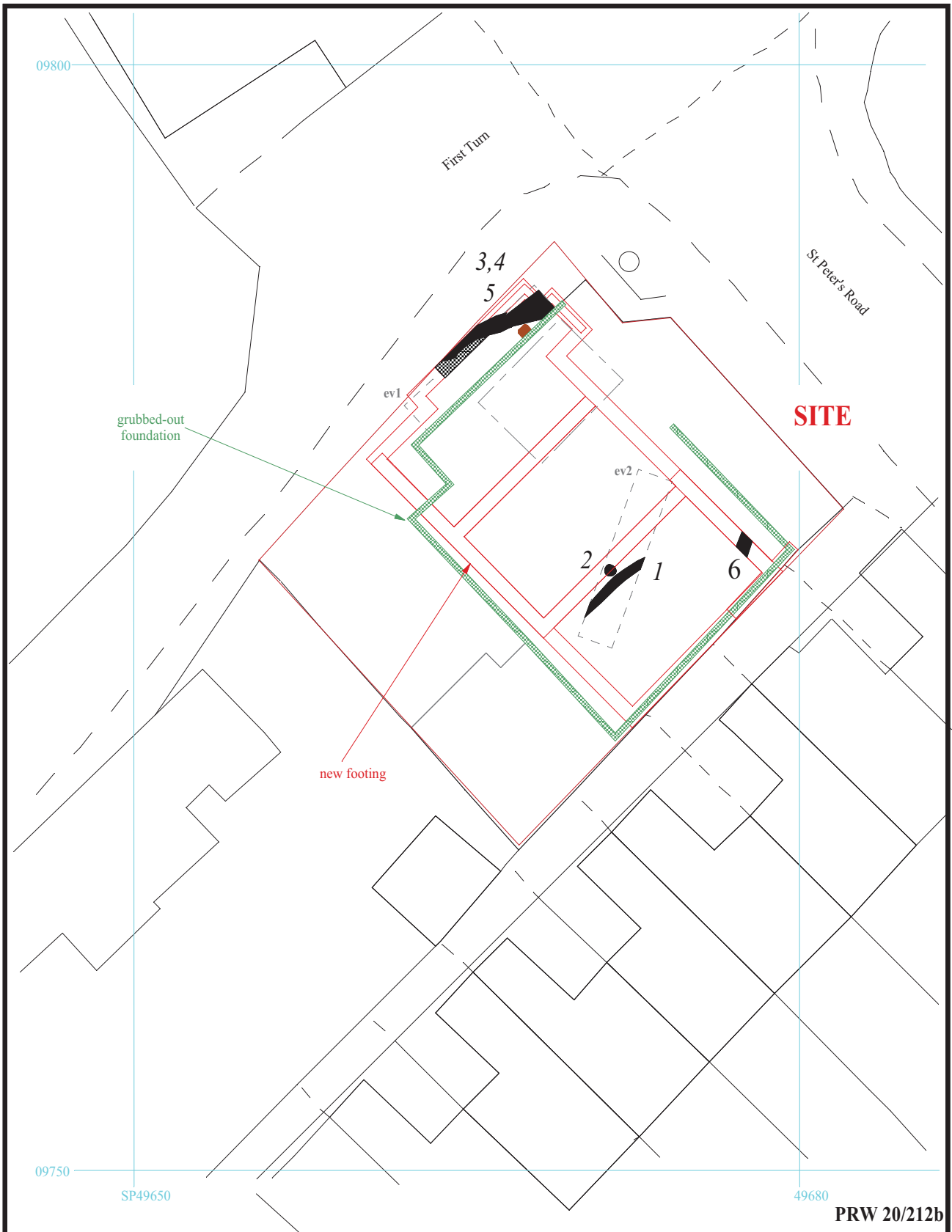
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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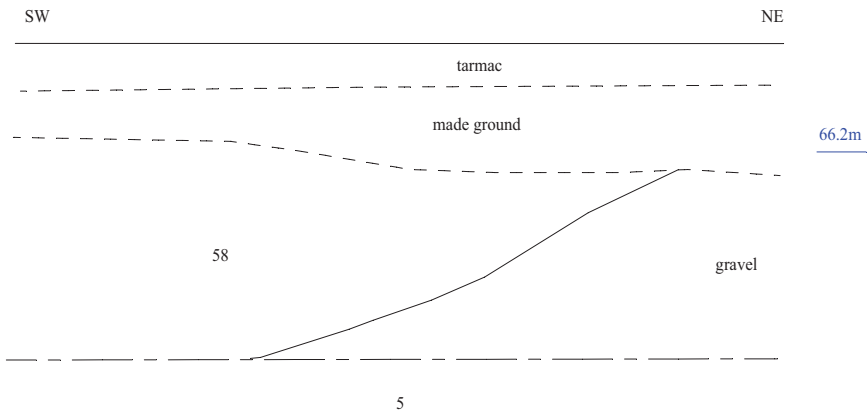
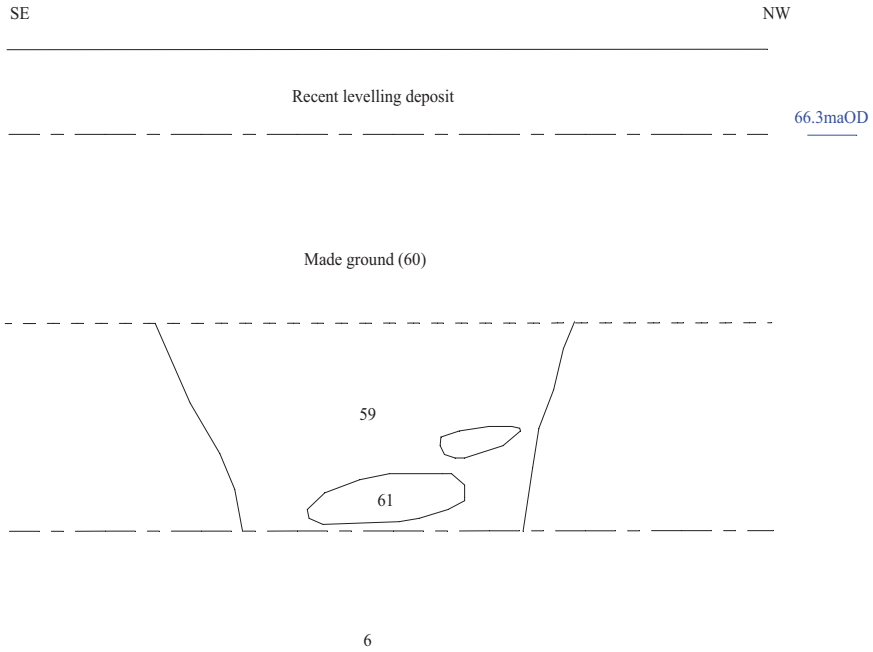




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Figure 3. Location of observed areas and previous work..





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Figure 4. Sections.



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Plate 1. Ground strip adjacent to existing footing, looking North West, Scale: 0.3m.



Plate 2. North East Footing, Ditch 6, looking South West, Scale: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. North West footing trench, west side, looking North East,
Scale: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.



Plate 4. Edge of cut for ditch 3/4, looking east, Scale: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

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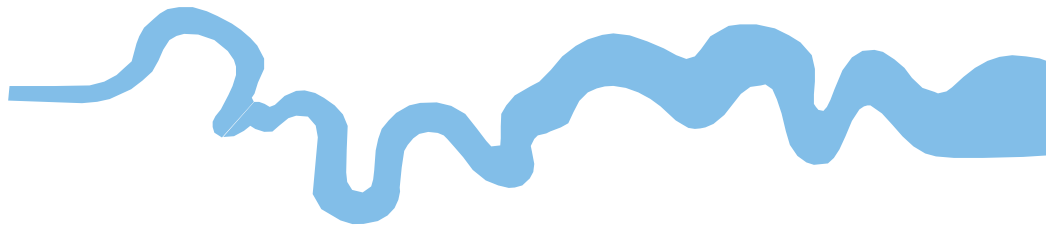
2 St Peters Road, Wolvercote,
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Plates 3 and 4.

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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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