

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**New Garage, St Nicholas House, 90 High Street,
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: NHW21/143

(SU 6089 8554)

**New Garage, St Nicholas House,
90 High Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for Mr. and Mrs Sandall

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code NWH 21/143

May 2022

Summary

Site name: New Garage, St Nicholas House, 90 High Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 6089 8554

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 3rd-22nd February 2022

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Maisie Foster, Andrew MUNDIN and David Sanchez

Site code: NHW 21/143

Area of site: c.3800 sq m

Summary of results: No finds nor deposits of any archaeological interest were observed in the foundation trenches of the new garage nor an exploratory test pit. Much modern ground was recorded. The natural geology was not reached.

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

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 20.05.22 Steve Preston ✓ 20.05.22

New Garage, St Nicholas House, 90 High Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Report 21/143

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at St Nicholas House, 90 High Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (SU 6089 8554) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Adam Dodgson of Matthew T Young Architects, 25 Hunts Mill, Goldsmiths Lane, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 0DN on behalf of Mr. and Mrs Sandall, St Nicholas House, 90 High Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 0BW.

Planning permission (P21/S0996/HH) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a replacement garage and associated facilities. The consent is subject to two conditions (5 and 6) relating to archaeology requiring a watching brief during the groundwork.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Steven Weaver, Planning Archaeologist with Oxfordshire County Archaeology Service advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Maisie Foster, Andrew MUNDIN and David Sanchez between 3rd and 22nd February 2022 and the site code is NHW 21/143.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern side of Wallingford and on the northern side of the High Street (Figs 1 and 2). It is set back to the rear of St Nicholas House and comprised a flat parcel of land with a concrete slab (removed). It was bounded by residential and commercial properties to the east and west with gardens and the remains of St Nicholas' College (within the grounds of Wallingford Castle) to the north, with the River Thames to the east. The underlying geology is mapped as 1st Flood Plain Terrace Gravels (BGS 1980) and the site lies at a height of c.47m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Mr Steven Weaver of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Weaver 2021). In summary the generalized potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Upper Thames Valley with numerous sites recorded from the air, gravel extraction and other fieldwork in the area (eg: Booth *et al.* 2007; Lambrick *et al.* 2009; Benson and Miles 1974). More specifically the archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of the Saxon stronghold (*burh*) and medieval town (Preston 2010; Airs *et al.* 1975; Christie 2013). It lies on the north side of the main east-west thoroughfare through the town leading to the bridge across the Thames, with the Medieval castle immediately to the north. A programme of test pits dug by the Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society immediately to the south and south west of the proposal site have revealed a medieval cess pit and occupation deposits of late Saxon and medieval date.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This was to involve permanent monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and include observation of surface stripping, ground reduction to the top of the relevant horizon and the excavating of foundation trenches, service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work as necessary.

A test pit to ascertain ground conditions was monitored as well as some ground reduction and foundation trenches.

Results

Test pit (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

A test pit was dug to ascertain the ground conditions. This measured 1.20m x 1.20m and was dug to a depth of 1.05m. The stratigraphy observed comprised 0.15m of a concrete slab overlying 0.12m of hoggin overlying 0.20m of silty clay, which in turn overlay 0.30m of mid grey brown silty clay which overlay 0.25m of a dark brown silty clay. This has been cut through by a modern light green grey sandy clay deposit, which may represent a levelling of the slope towards the north during previous development of the site.

Footing Trenches (Fig. 3; Pls 3 and 4)

Prior to the foundation trenches being dug the area was reduced by 0.25m, entirely within the mid grey-brown silty clay layer. The trenches measured 0.80m wide and were dug to a depth of c.1.10m. These again were dug through the mid grey brown silty clay seen in the test pit to a depth of 0.80m. This overlay 0.30m of a dark brown silty clay and showed the same light green grey sandy clay modern, levelling, deposit on the northern side. The underlying gravel natural was not exposed at any point. No features of archaeological interest were encountered.

Finds

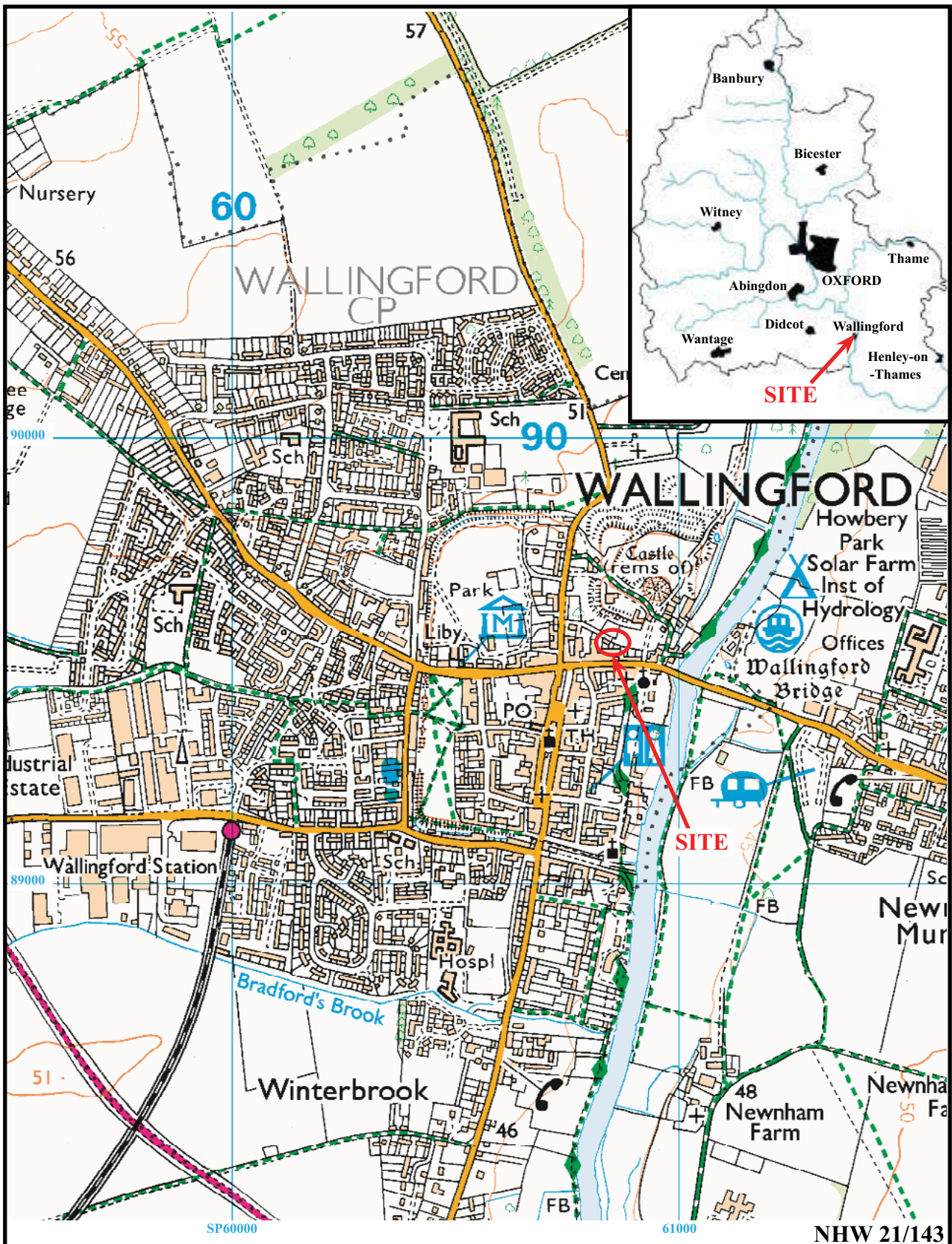
No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered during the watching brief.

Conclusion

The watching brief was successfully carried out but despite the potential for archaeology to be present on the site no deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed. Much of the site appeared to have been previously levelled during earlier development.

References

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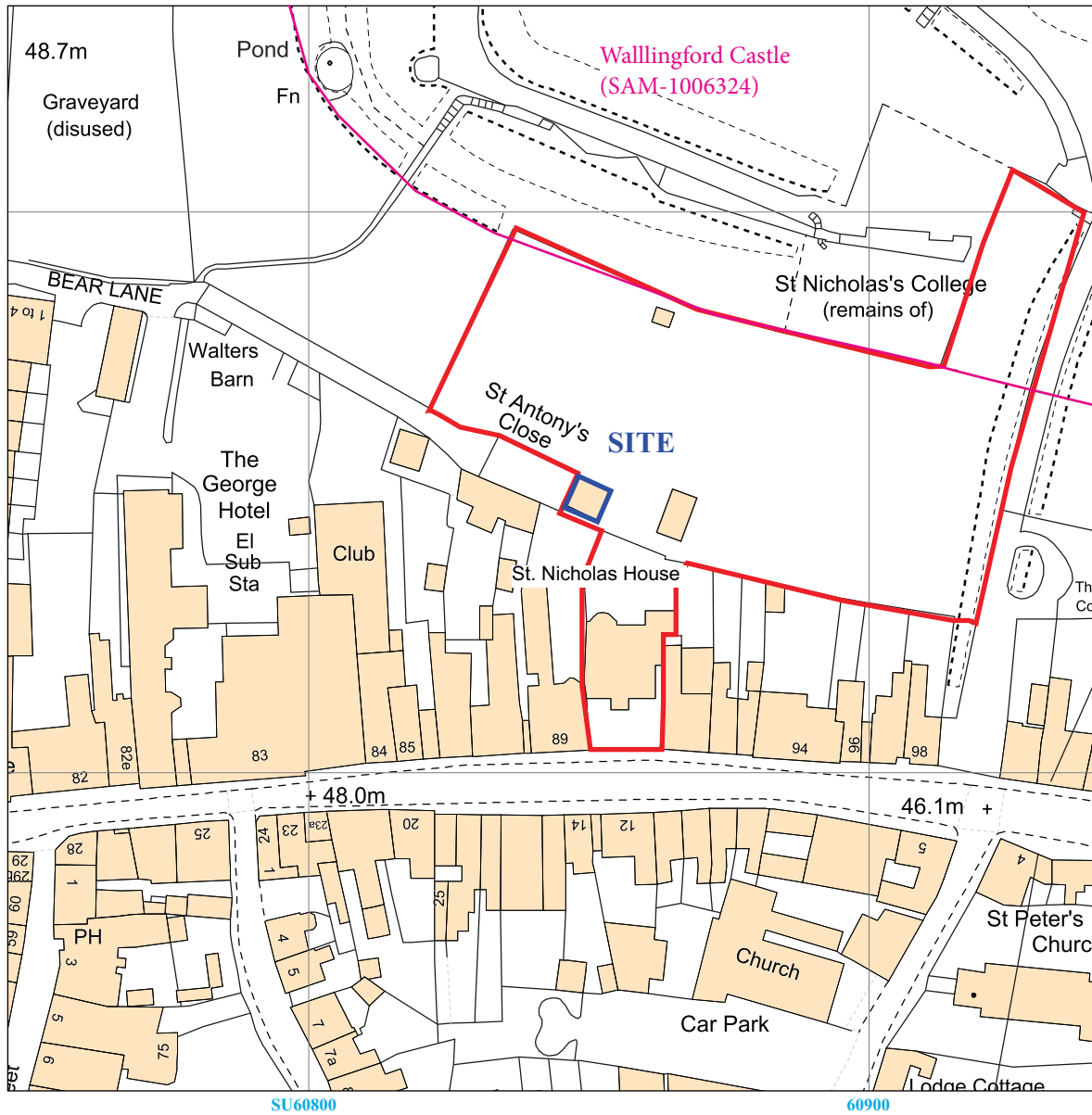


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**Figure 1. Location of site within Wallingford and
Oxfordshire.**

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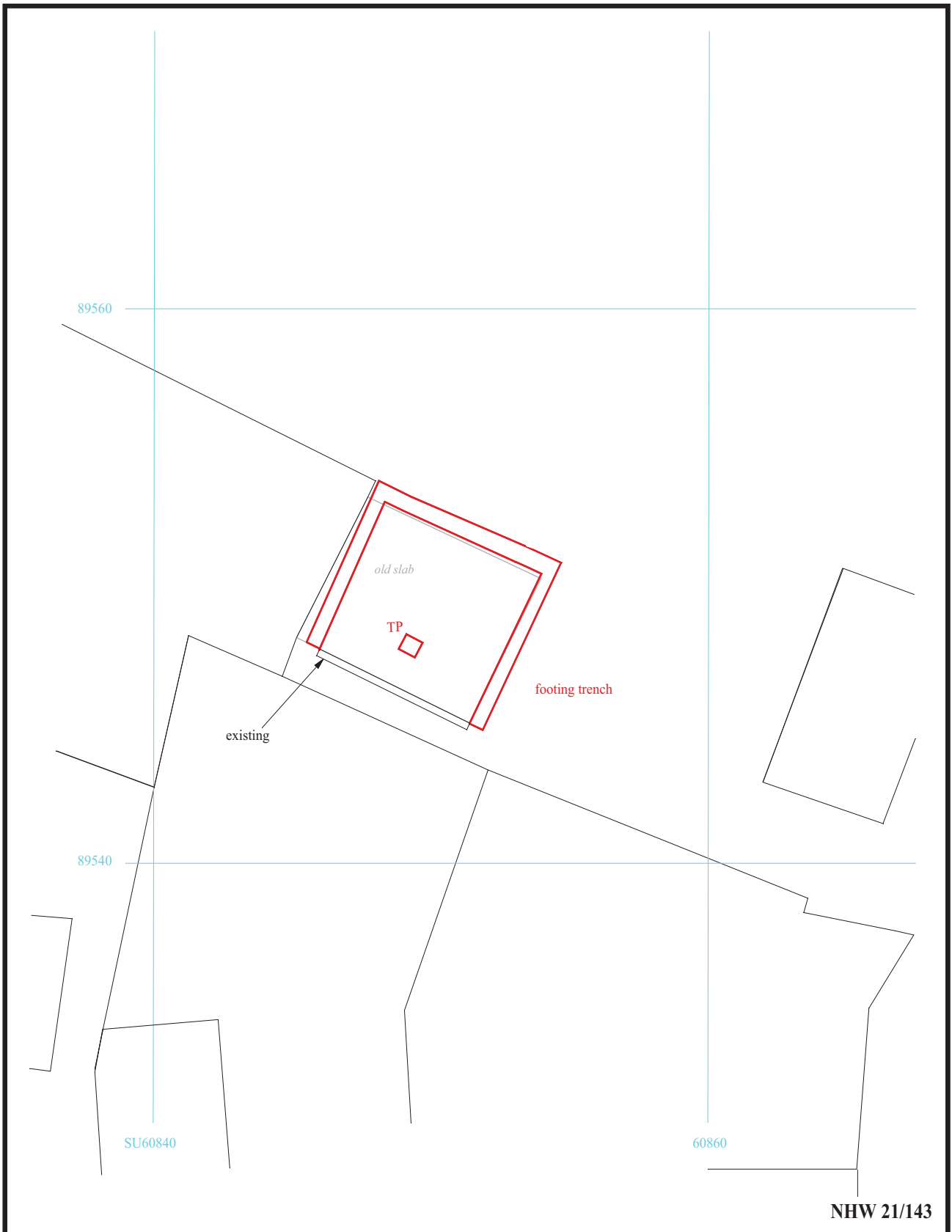


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 Figure 2. Detailed location of site of Nicholas House
 on High Street, compared to Castle Schedule (SAM) limit.
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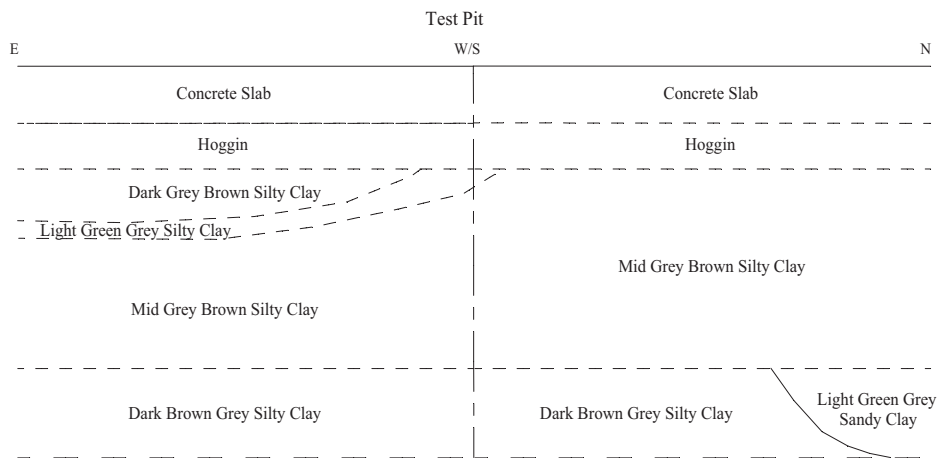




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Figure 3. Location of observed area.





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Figure 4. Sections.





Plate 1. Setting, showing Test Pit before concrete slab removed, looking North East, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Test pit, looking South West, Scale: 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. West side trench, Lower cut feature?, looking North West.



Plate 4. Truncation of previous foundation in East side trench section, looking South West,
Scale: 1m.

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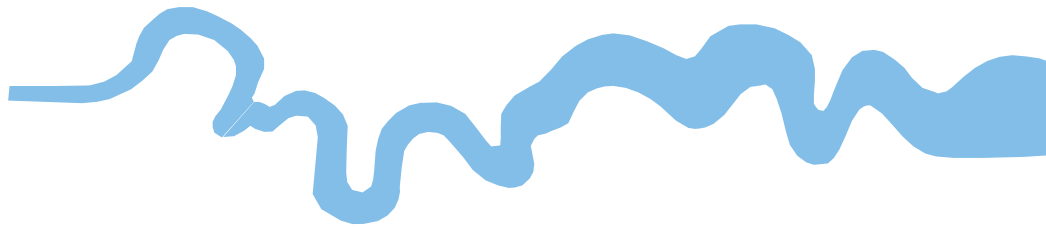
**New garage, St. Nicholas House, 90 High Street,
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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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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