

**Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames,
Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Keith Russell

by Heather Hopkins
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code LCD 09/26

April 2009

Summary

Site name: Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 57845 94200

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 1st April 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: LCD 09/26

Area of site: 21 sq m (plot overall 850 sq m)

Summary of results: The groundworks did not penetrate below topsoil level and the archaeological relevant levels were therefore not observed nor disturbed.

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

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 22.04.09 Steve Preston✓ 17.04.09
---------------------------	---

Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Heather Hopkins

Report 09/26

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire (SU 57845 94200) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Keith Russell of Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street, Dorchester, Oxfordshire. Planning permission has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council (appln P08/W0982) for the removal of an existing structure and its replacement with a utility room/garden store. The full site area is approximately 850 sq m, but only 21 sq m is directly affected. The development is within the Dorchester Conservation Area. The new structure affects a Grade II Listed Building. A condition of the consent is the implementation of an archaeological watching brief to be maintained during the course of the works.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist, County Archaeological Services, and based on a brief supplied by him (Oram 2008). The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor on 1st April 2009 and the site code is LCD 09/26.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the historic core of Dorchester-on-Thames. Dorchester is located on the river Thames, down-river of Abingdon and Oxford which are to the north and west. The site is located at the southern end of the High Street, to the west of the Abbey Church of SS Peter and Paul (Fig. 2). The site was occupied by an outbuilding and garden. The land is relatively flat at 49m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is First (Flood Plain) Terrace Deposits, described as Younger River Gravels by the British Geological Survey (BGS 1980). The underlying geology was not observed during the watching brief.

Archaeological background

The site is located in an area of considerable archaeological potential as it is close to the centre of the historic core of the medieval town. It is 40m to the west of the Abbey Church (Fig. 2). This stands on the site of the original Saxon cathedral founded by St Birinus in AD635. The church was rebuilt in the 12th century. The site is also the location of a Monastery of Augustinian Canons founded in 1140. The development site is located within the original limits of the Saxon Church and later monastery. A human burial was discovered 50m to the south west of the site and there have been a large number discovered within 100m to the south. It is not known if these relate to the Saxon Minster or later monastery (Oram 2008).

The site also lies within the Roman town a watching brief undertaken 40m north of the site observed Roman deposits, thought to form part of the original Roman town ditch and a tessellated pavement was discovered during renovation work on the church to the east. Undated walls and drains have been discovered 50m to the north (Oram 2008). Evaluations at the Old Castle Public House to the south (Torrance and Ford 1991) and at the site of the former filling station on the High Street to the north (Coles 2001) discovered complex Roman occupation deposits.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve continuous monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any ground reduction, and the digging of foundation trenches, services runs and soakaways. Archaeological deposits threatened by digging of foundation trenches and other groundworks were to be excavated and recorded, and provision was made for taking environmental/organic samples where appropriate.

Results

Following removal of the existing building on the site, the entire area of the new structure was subject to ground reduction to a depth of 0.45m by hand (Figs. 3 and 4). The stratigraphy revealed comprised 0.25m of a stone patio and make-up layer overlying a buried topsoil. The buried topsoil was also truncated to a depth of 0.2m but this did not reveal the natural geology. An area of made ground formerly occupied by a toilet at the northern end of the site was truncated below the foundation level. No features or finds of archaeological significance were discovered

Finds

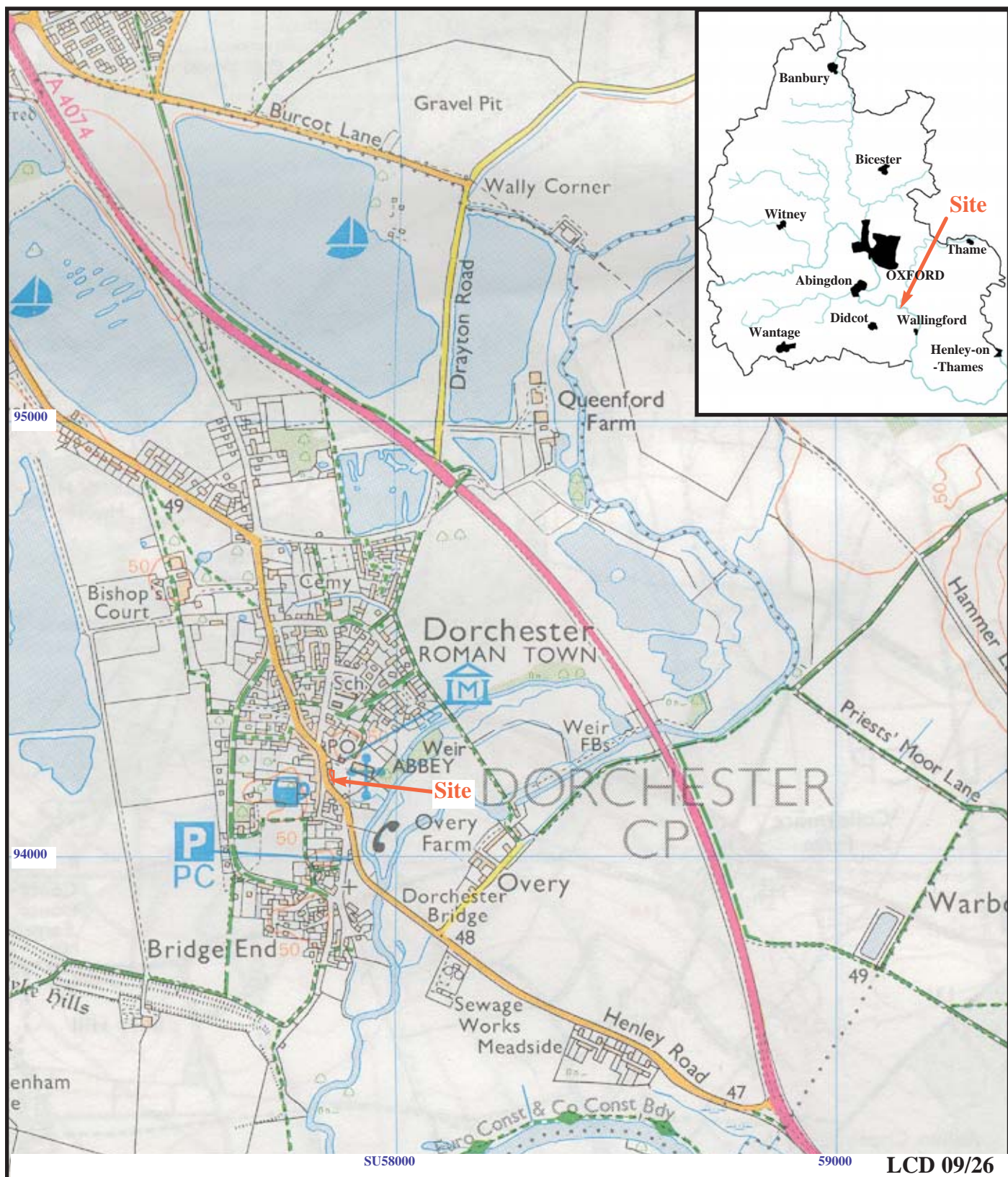
No finds were discovered.

Conclusion

Nothing of archaeological significance was discovered. The area of ground reduction did not extend beyond the topsoil or made ground. It was therefore not possible to establish if any archaeological deposits existed on the site. No archaeological finds were observed within the topsoil.

References

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Coles, S, and Ford, S, 2001, Former Filling Station, High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, an archaeological watching brief, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 01/36, Reading
- Oram, R, 2008, P08/W0982 – Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames design brief for archaeological watching brief, County Archaeological Services, Oxford
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Torrance, L and Ford, S, 1991, The Old Castle Public House, Bridge End, Dorchester upon Thames, Oxfordshire, an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 91/10, Reading

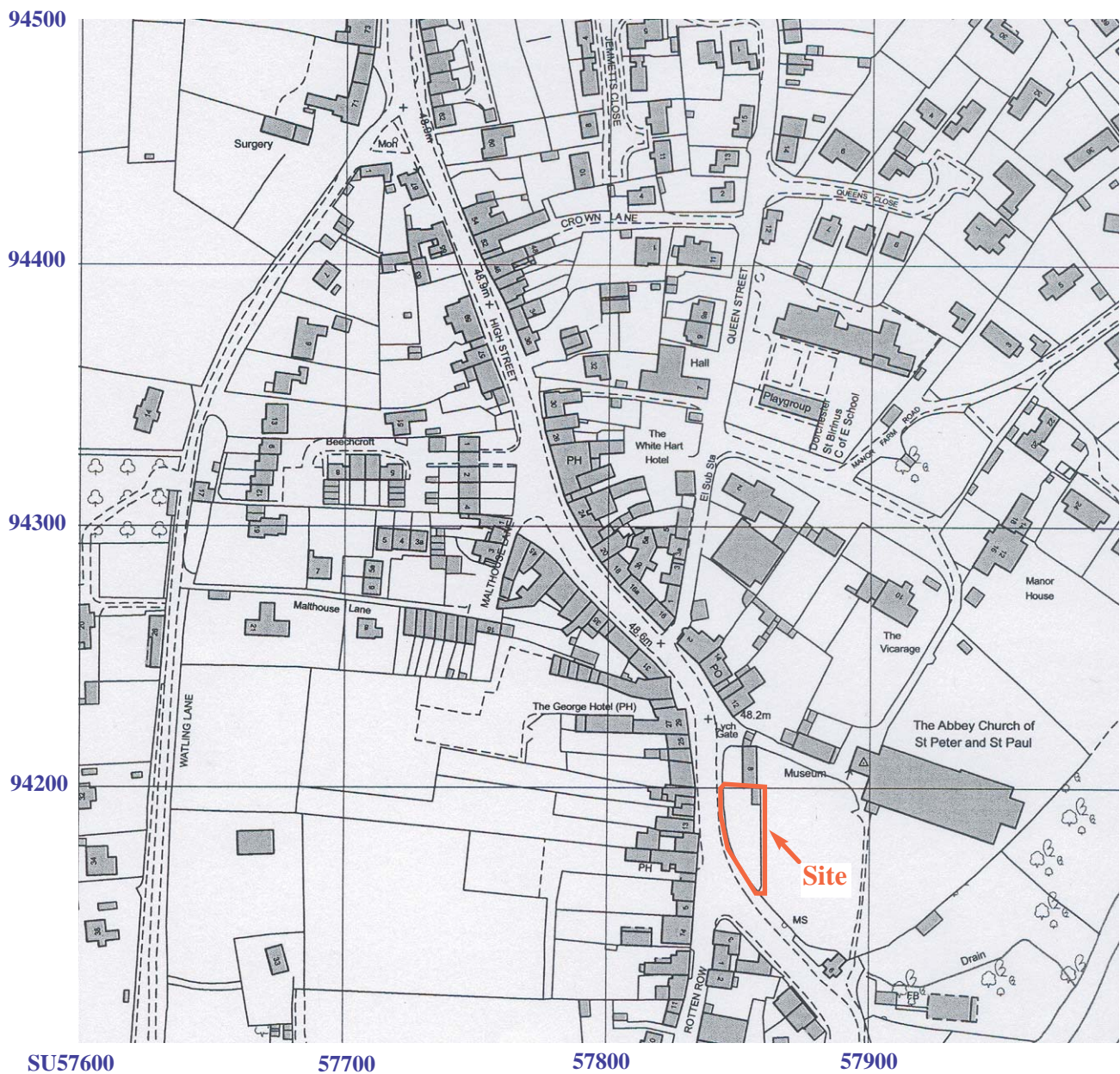


**Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street,
Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, 2009
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site in Dorchester-on-Thames
and Oxfordshire

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 170 at 1:12500.
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



LCD 09/26

**Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street,
Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, 2009
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Location of site on High Street,
Dorchester-on-Thames

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale: 1:2500

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, 2009

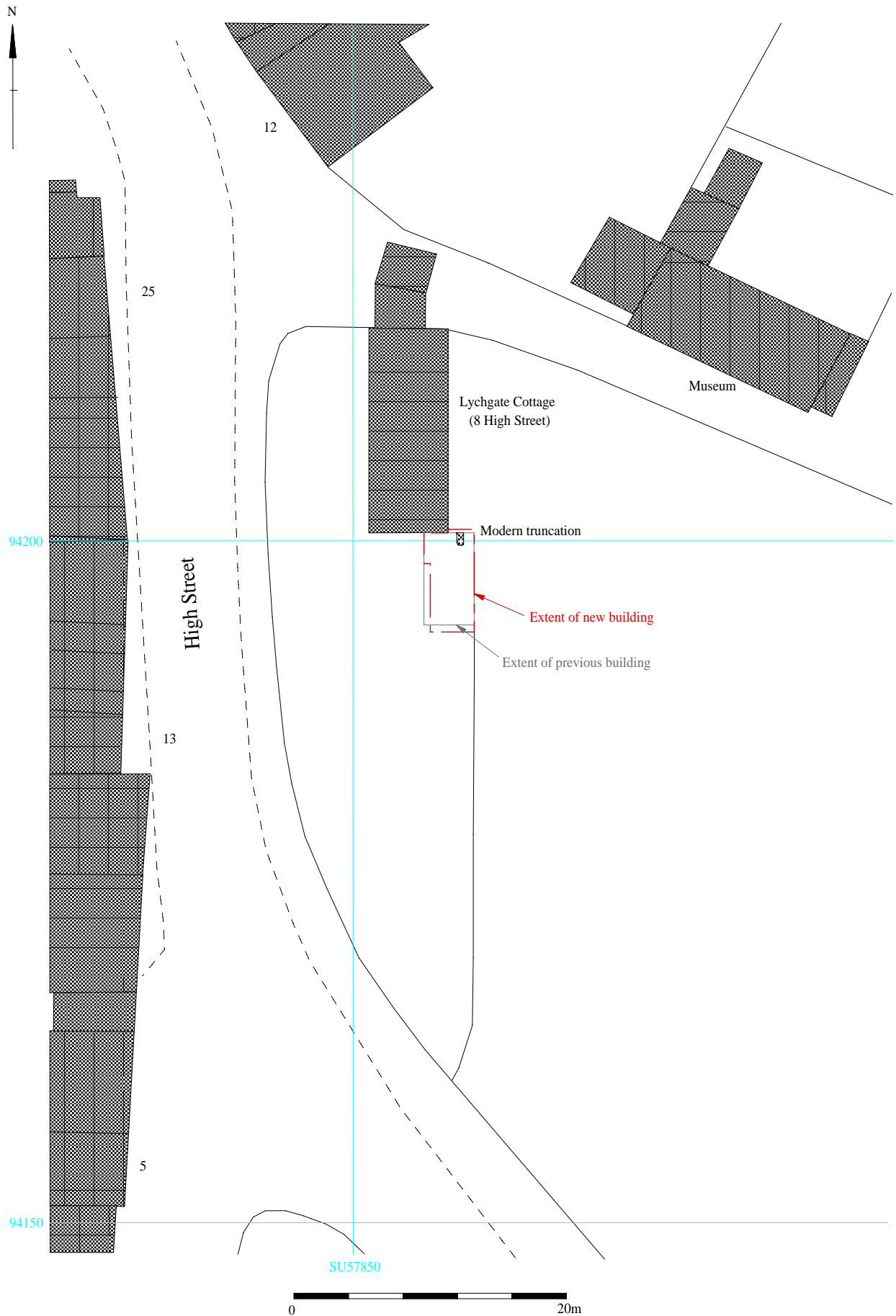


Figure 3. Detail of investigation during groundworks.

Lychgate Cottage, 8 High Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, 2009

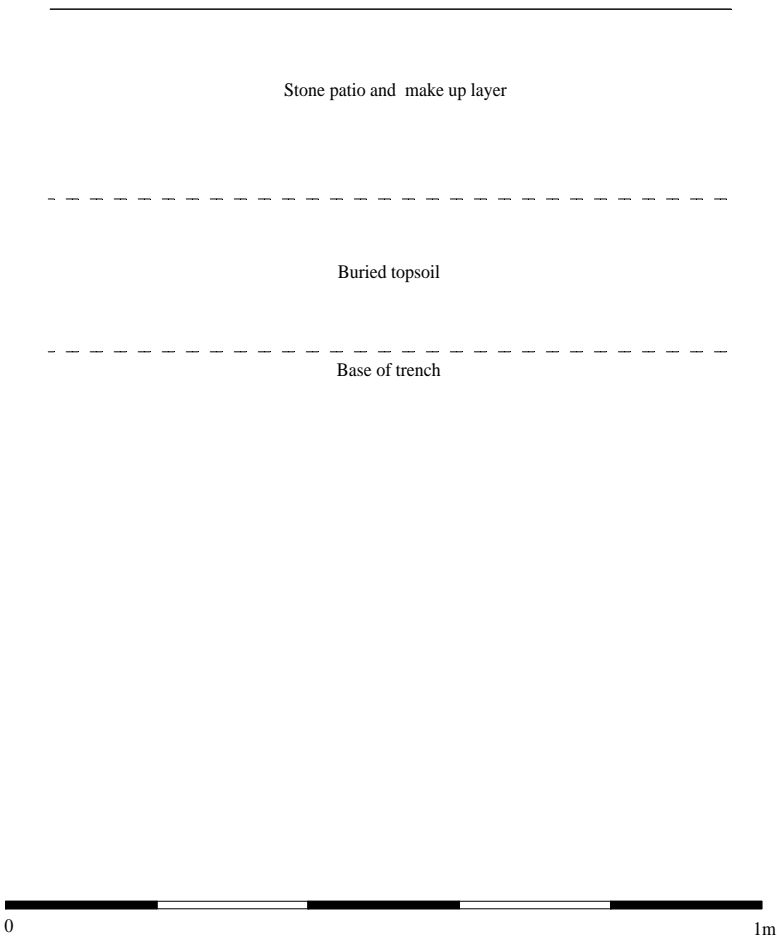


Figure 4. Representative section