

**82 Moorbridge Road,
Maidenhead, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Dr N S Sehra

by Tim Dawson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code MRM 09/84

October 2009

Summary

Site name: 82 Moorbridge Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8941 8127

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 8th – 9th September 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: MRM 09/84

Area of site: c. 120 sq m

Summary of results: One shallow ditch containing 14th- to 15th-century pottery was recorded in the foundation trenches.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 05.10.09 Steve Preston ✓ 05.10.09

82 Moorbridge Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 09/84

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 82 Moorbridge Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8941 8127) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mal Kang of Cameron Construction on behalf of Dr Narinder Sehra, Acorn Dental Care, 8 Stoke Poges Lane, Slough, Buckinghamshire, SL1 2NT.

A planning consent (05/00002/FUL) has been granted by Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to construct a single-storey rear extension following demolition of an existing extension and outbuildings at 82 Moorbridge Road, Maidenhead. The planning consent is subject to a condition which requires the implementation of an archaeological 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 Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona MacDonald, Principal Archaeologist at Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Royal Borough on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson between 8th and 9th September 2009 and the site code is MRM09/84.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the east of the centre of Maidenhead, with the River Thames 600m to the east and a smaller unnamed channel, which passes through the town centre, c. 70m to the west (Fig. 1). The site itself is occupied at the north end by the existing property with an 1818 date stone, behind this is the area where the previous extension, now demolished, once stood (Fig. 2). The rear of the site is open with a row of garages to the west. The surrounding landscape is built-up with the A4 on the far side of Moorbridge Road, bordering the north of the site. The topography is generally level with a slight slope down towards the south end of the site away from the road. The site lies on the geological border between alluvium and Shepperton Gravel (BGS 2005) and is c. 23m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the margins of the historic core of Maidenhead (Astill 1978). A number of late medieval buildings lie nearby suggesting archaeological remains of similar medieval date and/or early post-medieval deposits may survive on the site. Nearby, at 1 High Street, occupation deposits have been recorded from the early medieval period (Cass and Pine 2005) and at 3 High Street a row of preserved wooden stakes which probably reveted a former river or stream channel were noted (Cass 2006). However, further to the east towards the Thames, on slightly higher ground formed by a gravel ridge, extensive evaluation yielded no deposits of finds of an archaeological nature though admittedly the site was heavily disturbed by modern foundations (Taylor 2006, Cass 2008).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular the digging of foundation trenches for the extension.

The foundation trenches observed were located behind the existing building where the previous extension stood. The depth of the trenches varied between 1.0 and 1.2m. A toothless bucket was used for the excavation.

Results

The foundations were dug 0.5m wide through various layers of building rubble, made ground containing modern bricks and concrete, including in places a *c.* 0.8-1.0m-deep layer of crushed chalk, which included fragments of modern rubble, and, at a depth of *c.* 1.0m, dark yellow natural clay (Fig. 3). The layer of chalk and rubble suggests that the whole of the site was levelled, possibly when the original structure was built in 1818. The site was disturbed throughout by service pipes and, towards the northern end, the basement and foundations of the now-demolished extension.

One archaeological feature identified on the site which was a shallow ditch (1) in the north-west corner (Fig. 4). This was first seen in the base of the foundation trench as it was being dug and had been partially truncated during the digging. It was excavated by hand to determine its depth and collect dating evidence. It was 0.37m deep, 1.1m wide and extended the entire width of the foundation trench. The ditch only contained one fill

(51) a dark yellow/brown clay, but it yielded finds of pottery, bone and brick/tile. Unexpectedly, feature (1) is not visible continuing in the foundation trench running parallel to the east.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised three medieval sherds with a total weight of 19g. They all occurred in the same context, (1,51), and the following fabric types were present:

Ashampstead ware, 12th – 14th century (Mepham and Heaton, 1995). Sandy wares produced at a manufactory c 15km to the west of Reading, the main products being jars and highly decorated glazed jugs, the latter often having painted geometric slip designs. 1 sherd, 15g.

Surrey Whiteware, mid 13th – mid 15th century (Pearce and Vince 1988). A range of whitewares from several sources in Surrey, including Kingston and Cheam. Range of vessel forms which changes over time, but the earlier assemblages are dominated by glazed jugs, some with slipped, incised and plastic decoration. 1 sherd, 3g.

Tudor Green Wares. Green-glazed whitewares produced at several centres in the south of England in Surrey and Hampshire. Wide range of late medieval vessel forms (Pearce and Vince 1988), often delicate and thin-walled, including jugs, costrels (portable flasks) and lobed cups. Common throughout central southern England, c. AD1380–1550. 1 sherd, 1g.

The fabric types are all well-known in the region, and are common finds at sites of the period. All the sherds are from glazed vessels. They suggest that activity at the site was limited to the later part of the medieval period, perhaps the 14th – 15th centuries, as common earlier medieval pottery types are entirely absent.

Bone and shell by Ceri Falys

Four fragments of animal bone and a single fragment of oyster shell were recovered from feature 1 (51). The oyster shell weighed 2g and was largely non-descript. The animal bone was all of sheep/goat origin and weighed a total of 49g. Three of the four fragments able to be refit into a single portion of a left mandible. No further information could be derived from these skeletal remains.

Tile

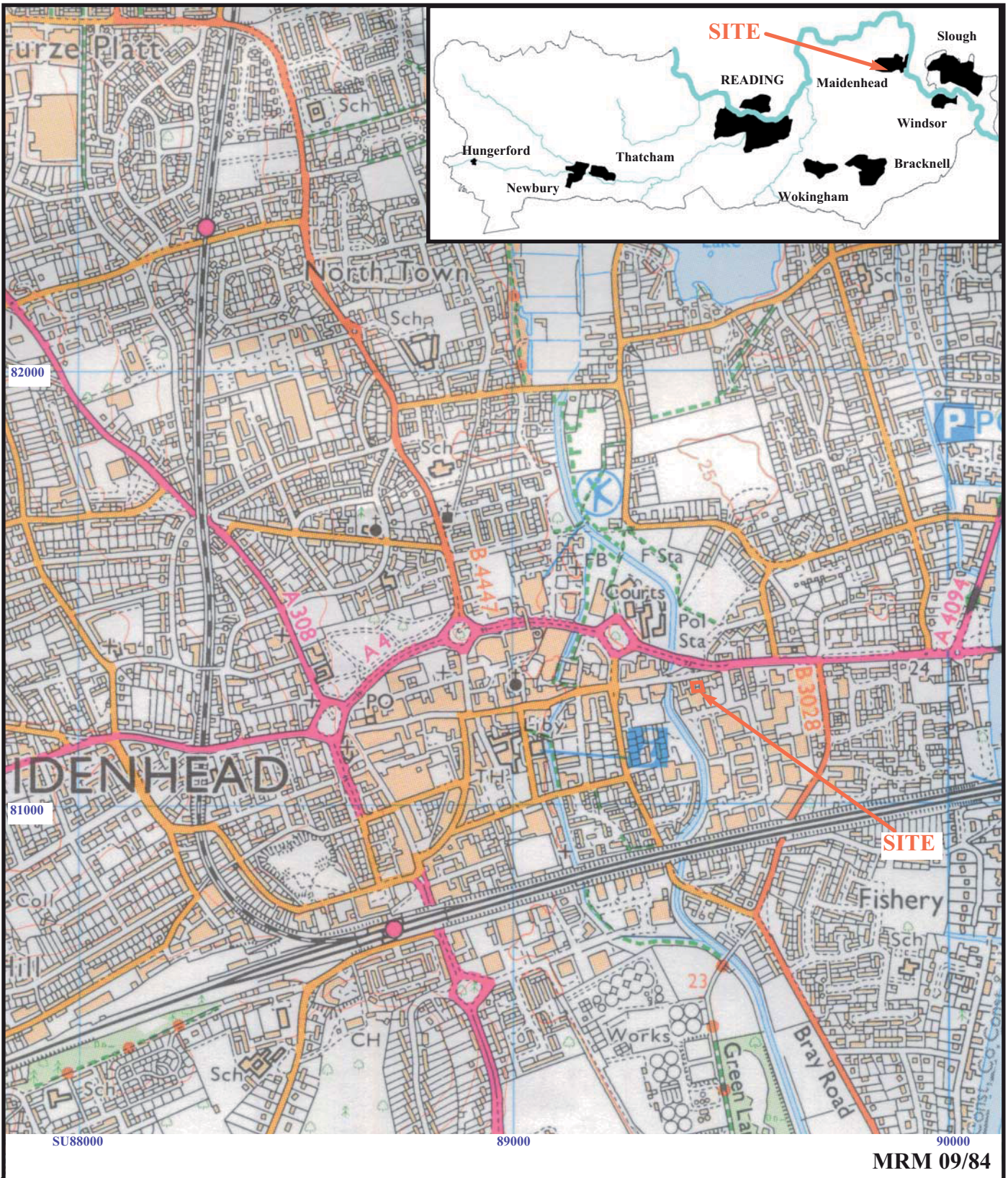
Three fragments of tile (270g) were recovered from feature 1(51).

Conclusion

One ditch, probably of late medieval date, was excavated during the digging of foundation trenches. It is unclear what this ditch may have been used for as there were no other associated features found and it did not extend further east. This is most likely because the majority of the site had been levelled during the late post-medieval/modern period.

References

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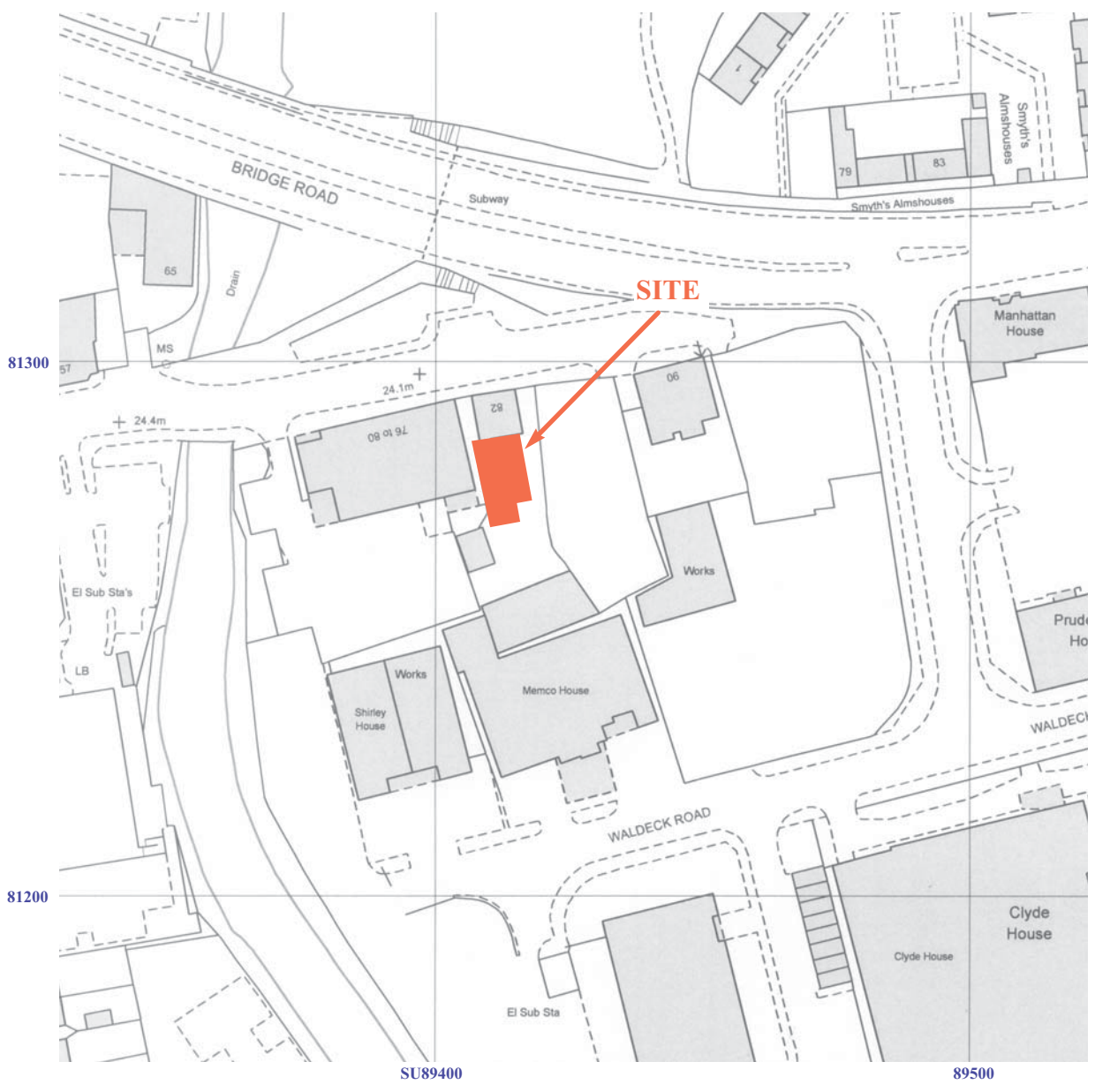


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Figure 1. Location of site within Maidenhead and Berkshire.

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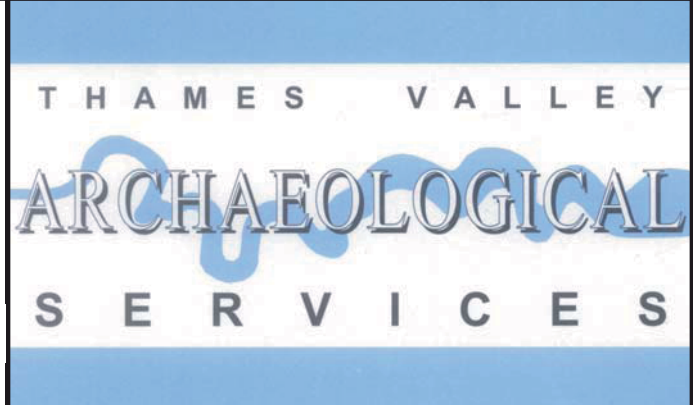


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Figure 2. Location of site off Moorbridge Road.

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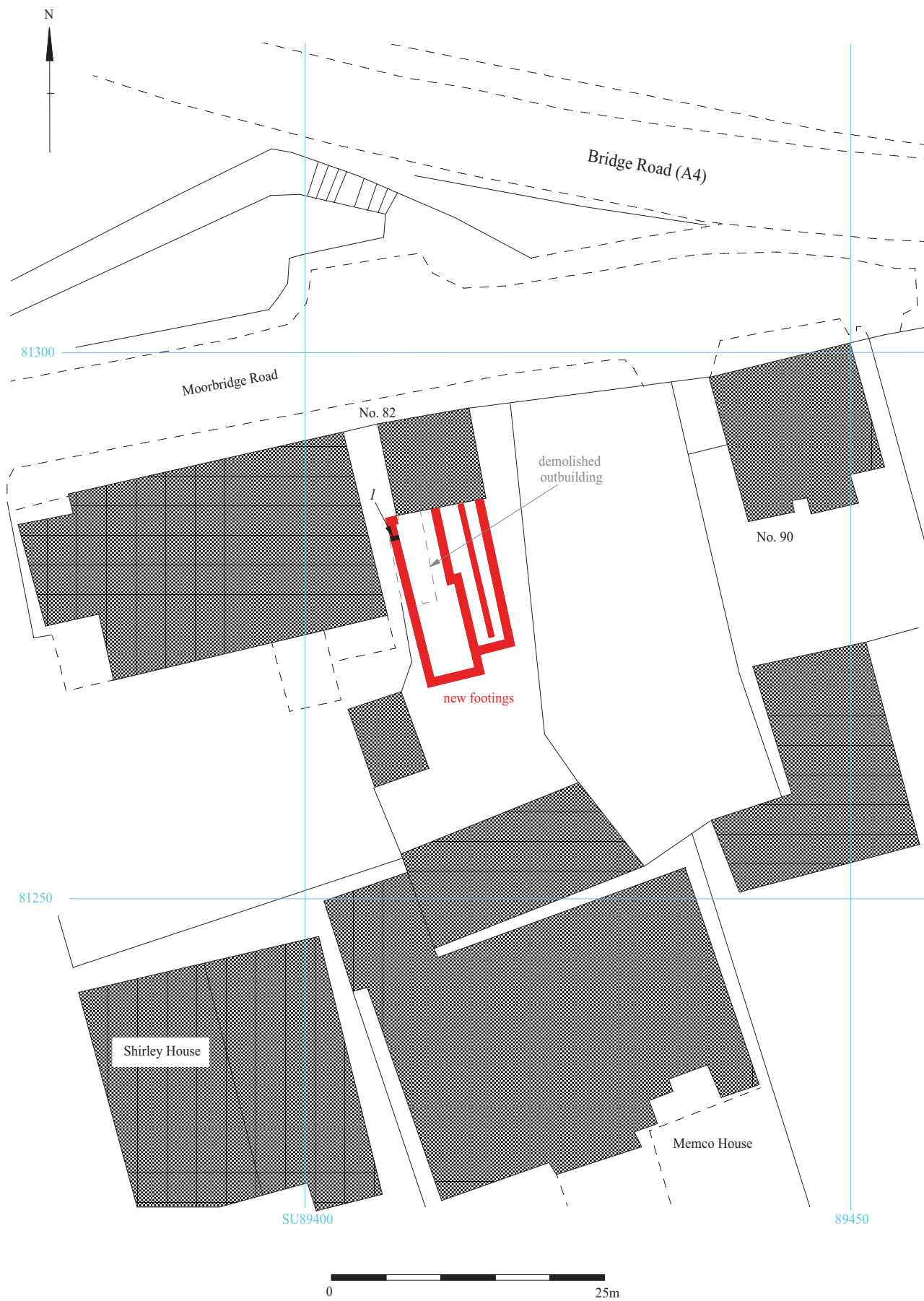


Figure 3. Location of area observed during watching brief.

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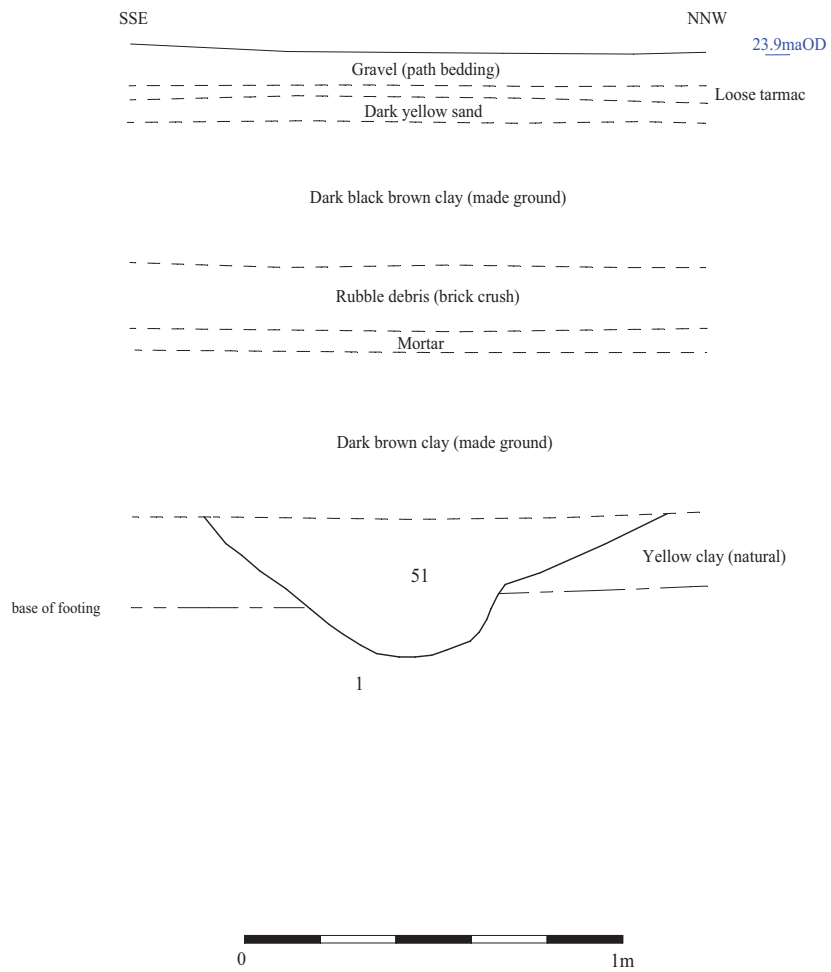


Figure 4. Section, showing representative section of footing trench and section for feature 1.