

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**17 Abbey Gardens, Chertsey,
Surrey**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by David Platt

Site Code: AGC14/171

(TQ 0450 6714)

17 Abbey Gardens, Chertsey, Surrey

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Woodland Commercial Ltd**

by David Platt

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code AGC 14/171

October 2014

Summary

Site name: 17 Abbey Gardens, Chertsey, Surrey

Grid reference: TQ 0450 6714

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 16th - 19th September 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: AGC 14/171

Area of site: c.40 sq m

Summary of results: Footings for a new northern extension to the existing house were observed. Deep alluvial deposits were recorded, derived from the nearby river. No archaeological features were observed nor finds were recovered.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 16.10.14 Steve Preston ✓ 13.10.14

17 Abbey Gardens, Chertsey, Surrey An Archaeological Watching Brief

by David Platt

Report 14/171

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 17 Abbey Gardens, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 8RQ (TQ 0450 6714) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Kevin Furey of Woodland Commercial Ltd, Innovation House, 292 Worton Road, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 6EL.

Planning permission has been gained from Runnymede Borough Council (RU.14/0796) for the erection of a two-storey extension and ground floor single side extension following the demolition and slab removal of the existing garage. The site lies within the Scheduled Ancient Monument (23002) of Chertsey Abbey and therefore Scheduled Monument Consent (ref S00091972) has been granted from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, in addition to the planning permission, before groundwork commenced. Both consents were subject to conditions requiring an archaeological watching brief to be maintained during groundworks.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Ben Jervis, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments, of English Heritage acting on behalf of the Secretary of State. The fieldwork was undertaken by Dan Strachan and David Platt between 16th–19th September 2014. The site code is AGC 14/171.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at the northern residential area of Chertsey, Surrey (Fig. 1). The house plot contains the remains of a demolished garage to the north of the current house, with this situated on the eastern side of the northern extent of Abbey Gardens (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is alluvium, most likely overlying Taplow Gravel, as the site lies on the flood plain of the Thames (BGS 1981). The Abbey River, a tributary (or mill leat) of the River Thames, lies just to the north. The site lies approximately 13m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

Archaeological background

The general potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley and in particular its proximity to the Benedictine Abbey of St Peter of Chertsey. There is evidence of prehistoric

occupation from the surrounding area but the suggestion of a Roman road running through the town has yet to be substantiated. The Abbey was founded in AD666 by St Erkenwald and is mentioned by Bede in the 8th century. It was destroyed in the 9th century by the Danes but reformed in the 10th century and rebuilt c.AD1110 until its ultimate destruction during the dissolution in the 16th century. Stones from the abbey were used in the building of Hampton Court Palace. Chertsey itself seems to have been a marshy island bordered by the Thames and its tributaries until the 8th century when the monks engineered the Abbey River to supply power to the Abbey watermill. Chertsey lies near an important crossing point on the Thames and seems to have been a fairly prosperous agricultural community.

The site of the Abbey precinct was first excavated during the 19th century and again in the 20th century revealing medieval ovens and a 13th- to 14th-century tile kiln. These excavations confirmed the layout of the 12th century Abbey buildings (O'Connell 1977). The current site lies within the boundary of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) for the Abbey and its precinct (23002). The area of the house and garage affected by development at the site lies within its northern boundary, though the northernmost part of the site (not affected by the groundworks) is in an area along the river which is excluded from the Scheduling (Fig. 2).

A recent watching brief at Abbey Barn Cottages to the south-west of the current site and also within the SAM found a modern pit cutting three undated features, along with exposed stonework in the foundation of the adjoining modern conservatory. The latter of these could relate to an original Abbey outbuilding though this could not be confirmed (Bray and Castle 2014).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any deposits affected by the new construction work. This involved monitoring of breaking out and removal of the concrete drive and the removal of the existing garage foundation and examination of the excavation of all the new foundation trenches. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

The initial stage of the watching brief was the removal of the concrete drive leading to the previous garage at the site. Nothing of interest was encountered in this operation, following which observation of the new footing trenches took place (Fig. 3).

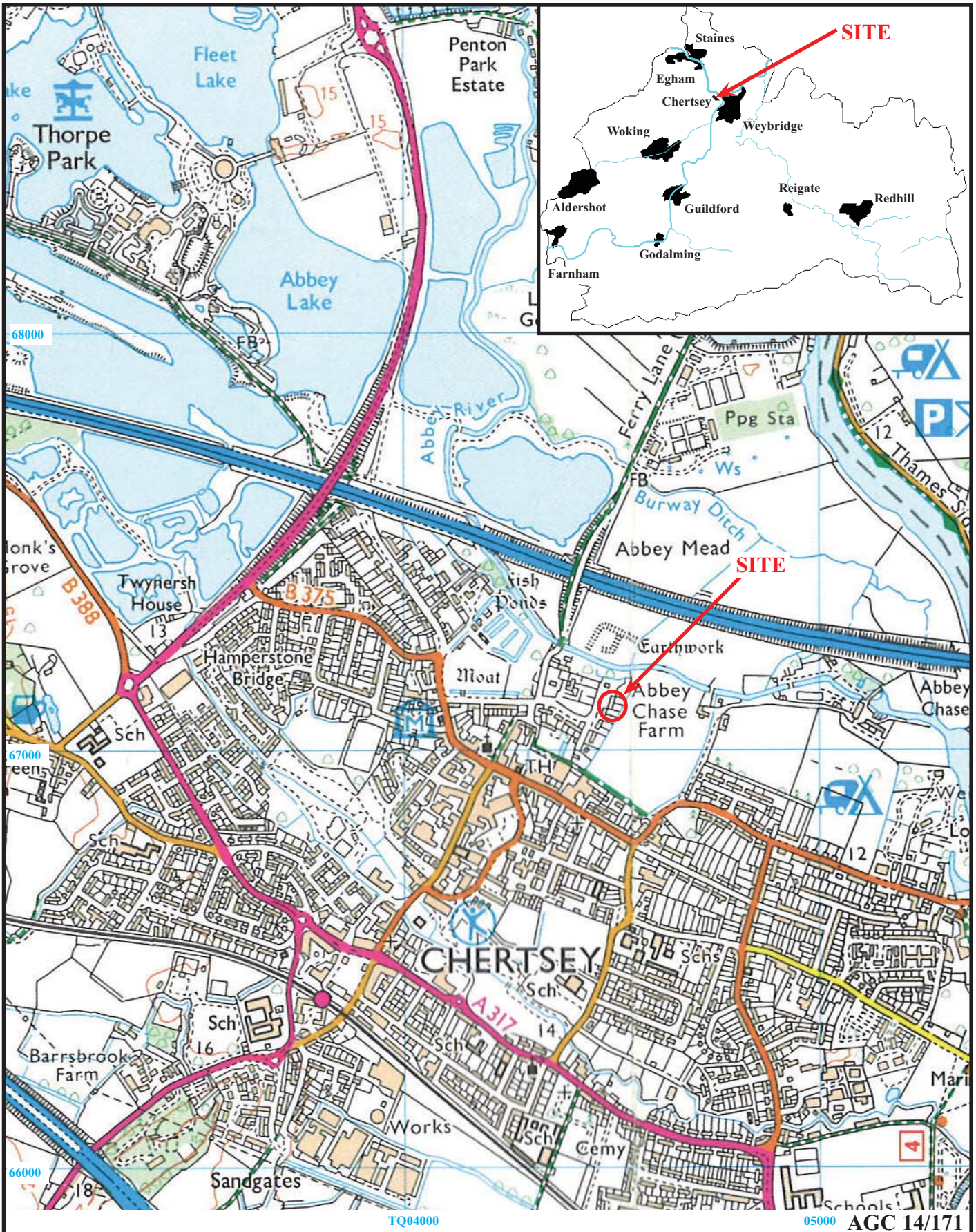
All trenching was observed. The trenching was done using a small 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a bladed bucket that was 0.6m wide. Below 0.25m of topsoil, a dark brown silty clay, a further layer of modern overburden was observed, reaching a depth of 0.4m (Fig.4, Pl.1 and 2). This in turn overlay a dark brown grey clayey silt, a possible subsoil. This was sterile and devoid of even modern material. Below this, from 0.75m to 1.65m was pale greyish brown alluvial clay. A second layer of dark grey brown alluvial clay was then recorded from 1.65m to the base of excavation at 2.25m. No archaeological features were recorded cutting or buried by the alluvium. No features of even modern date, were seen to cut the subsoil from 0.4m. No finds were recovered from the observations.

Conclusion

Though the site lies within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Chertsey Abbey, no archaeological finds or deposits were observed to the north of 17 Abbey Gardens.

References

Bray, D, and Castle, A, 2014, 'Abbey Barn Cottage, Abbey Green, Chertsey, Surrey; an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl report **13/228**, Reading
BGS, 1981,, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
O'Connell, M, 1977, *Historic Towns in Surrey*, Surrey Archaeol Soc Res Vol **5**, Guildford

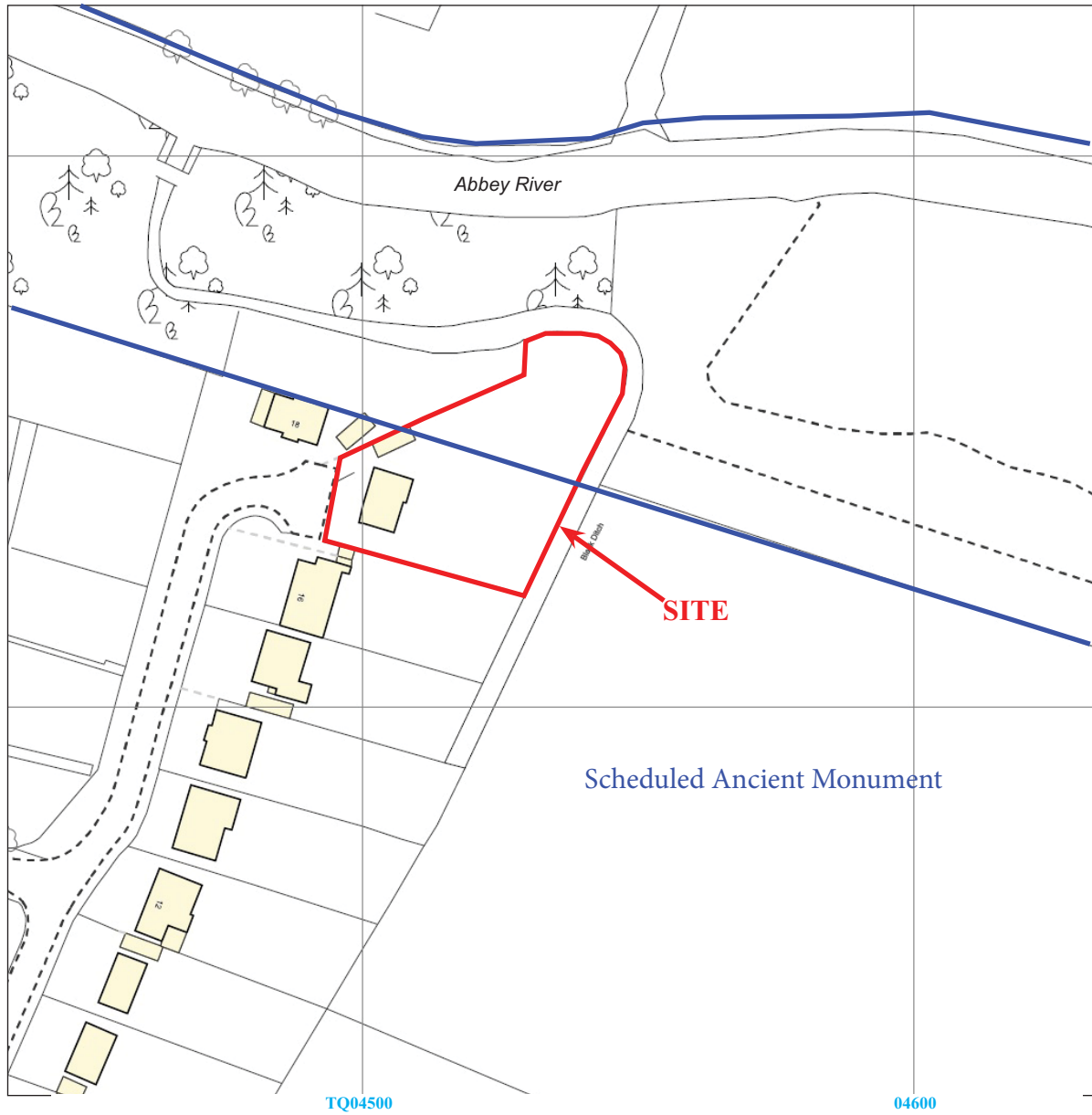


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Figure 1. Location of site within Chertsey and Surrey.

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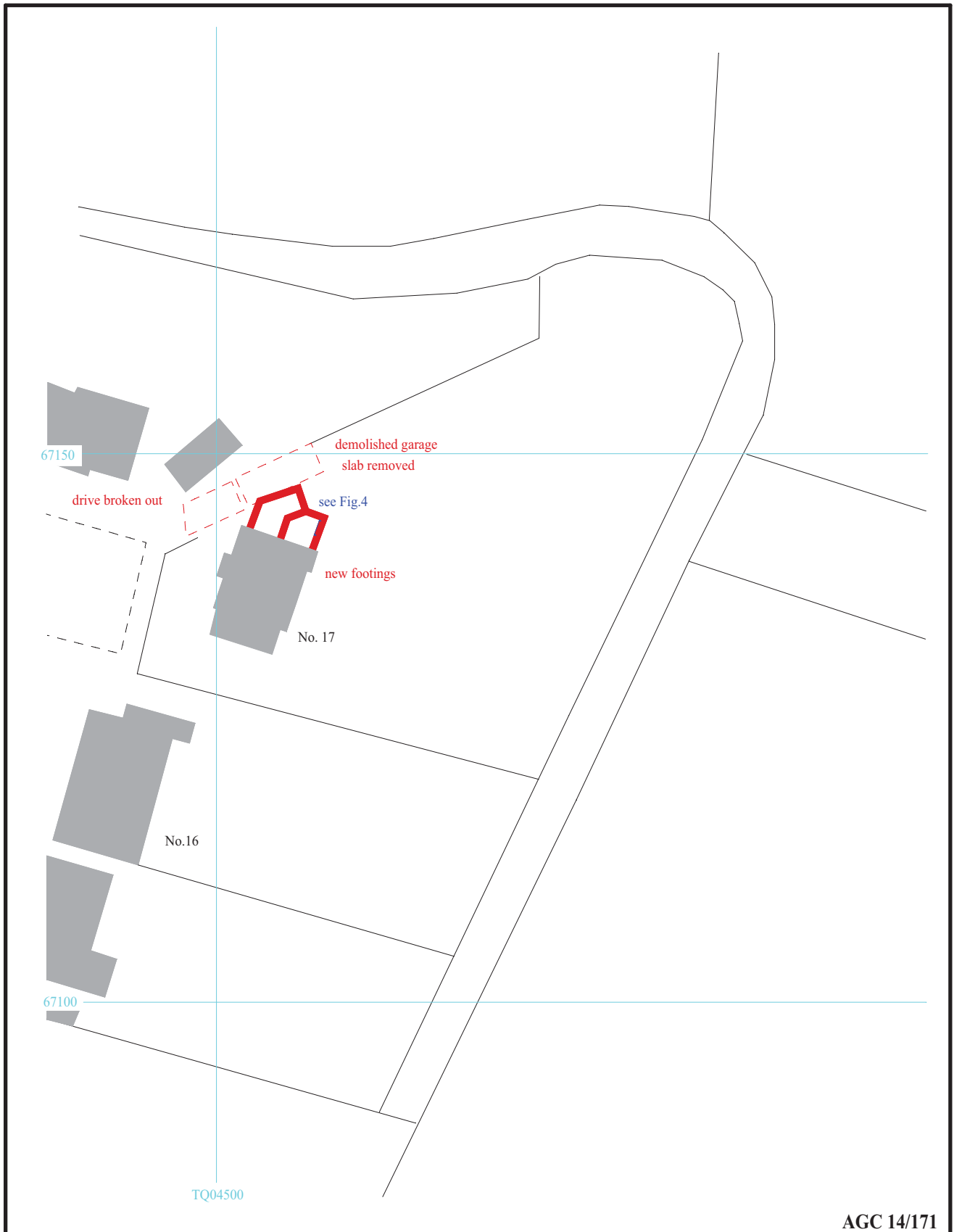
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Representative section (east footing), looking west, Scale: 2m.



Plate 2. Representative section (north footing), looking south, Scale: 1m.

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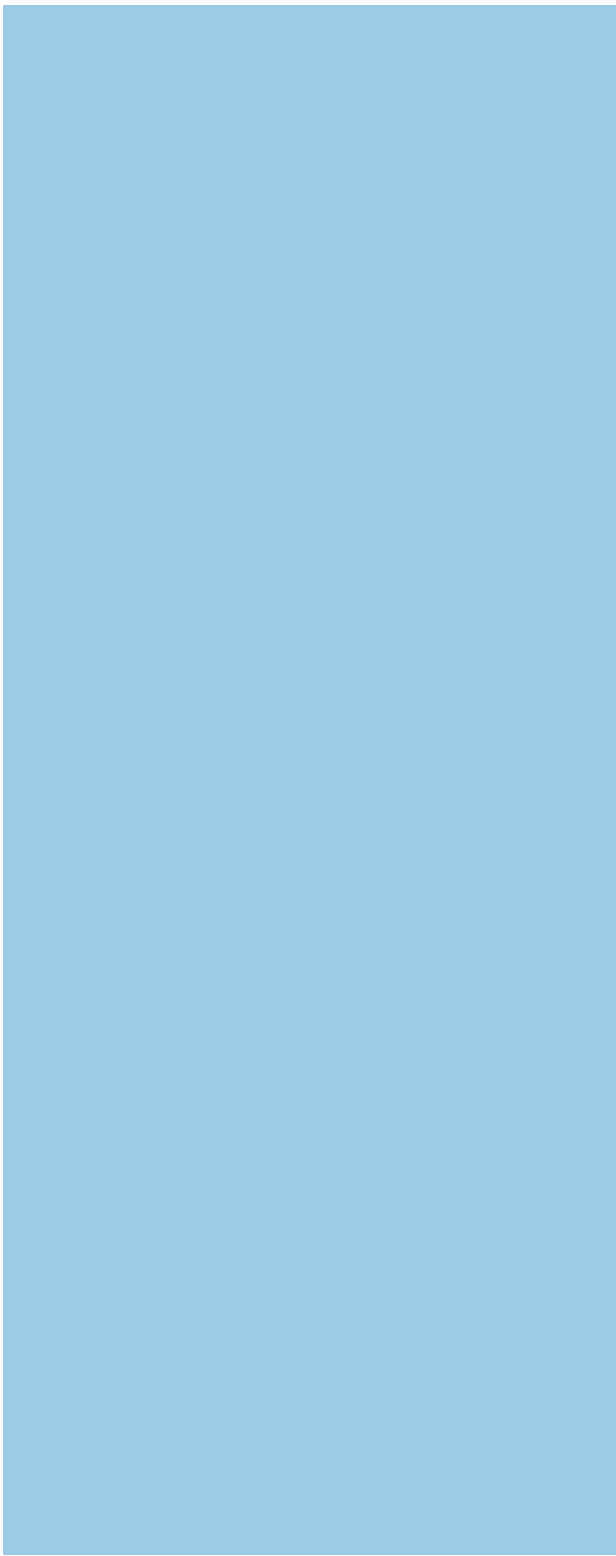
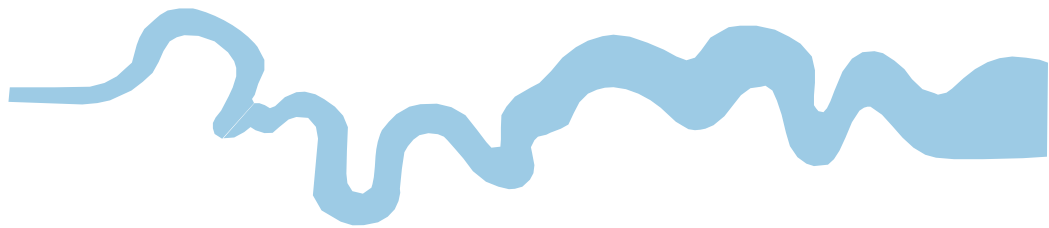
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Plates 1 - 2.

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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
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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
↓	↓



**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**