

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**46 Wood Street, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Aiji Castle

Site Code: WSW14/09

(SU 6076 8913)

**46 Wood Street, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs M Pitts

by Aiji Castle

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WSW 14/09

August 2014

Summary

Site name: 46 Wood Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 6076 8913

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 11th - 13th June 2014

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Aiji Castle and Dan Strachan

Site code: WSW 14/09

Summary of results: A trench for the rear extension to the existing house fronting Wood Street was observed. Three pits were revealed, two of which contained Medieval pottery.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 06.08.14 Steve Preston ✓ 07.08.14
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46 Wood Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Aiji Castle

Report 14/09

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 46 Wood Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 0AX (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Malcolm Pitts, of the above address.

Planning consent has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council to construct a single-storey extension to the rear of the property, along with modification to the existing garden boundaries. The consent is subject to two conditions (4 and 5), that require a programme of archaeological recording to occur during the groundworks, based on a specification agreed with the local planning authority prior to works starting.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, based on his brief (Oram 2014) and was also monitored by him. The fieldwork was carried out by Aiji Castle and Dan Strachan from 11th to 13th June 2014. The site code is WSW 14/09.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the west side of Wood Street, which is in the southern part of the town centre, at NGR SU 6076 8913 (Fig. 1). Wood Street links at its southern end with St.Leonard's Lane and the St.Leonard's Church is at its eastern end (Fig. 2). The site is in an area of residential houses. The site is approximately 48m above Ordnance Datum and is located on First Flood Plain gravel terrace deposit (BGS 1980).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in the brief prepared for this site by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2014). In summary, Wallingford lies in the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a particular wealth of features and finds recorded from most periods in the Wallingford area,

defining the town as a site of exceptional historical and archaeological importance (Benson and Miles 1974; Airs *et al* 1975; Keats-Rohan and Roffe 2009). Wood Street lies within the historic core within the defined Saxon defences (Christie *et al.* 2013). Many sites in the town have had archaeological investigation carried out during development works, which include investigation of elements of the Saxon *burh* and various locations where Medieval deposits have been encountered (Preston 2012). Earlier settlement evidence of prehistoric and Roman date has been recorded in the Hithercroft area of the town (Lewis 2009; Wallis 2009). Beyond the town itself the wider landscape has a long sequence of prehistoric and later use (Cromarty *et al.* 2006).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by works. This would involve the observation of all areas of foundation trenching or ground reduction required for the new development. Spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds before allowing any soil to be removed from site. The excavated features are catalogued in Appendix 1.

Results

A new foundation trench for the rear extension was dug by a mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.6m wide toothless bucket (Fig. 3). The trench was 1m deep and *c.* 0.6m wide. The stratigraphy comprised flagstone paving over sand bedding to a depth of 0.43m. Beneath this was a mixed deposit of dark grey modern made ground and grey brown fill (50).

On the western side of the site was pit 1 (Figs 3 and 4). The edges of the pit were difficult to define in the confines of the foundation trench, but were seen to extend most of the 5.5m length of this footing trench but being partly truncated to the south. It was at least 1m deep. It contained a dark grey black homogenous clayey sand deposit (51) which extended below the base of the excavation. Six sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from layer 51 along with small fragments of bone, oyster shell, tile, nails and some charcoal.

Two other features were visible in the north footing trench. The earlier feature, pit 2, was only partly defined, being cut by pit 3 on its eastern side and extended below the base of the trench. It contained six broadly similar, brown sandy clay layers (52–6, 58). The upper two layers (52, 53) containing four sherds of medieval pottery. Layer 52 also contained cattle bone and a little charcoal.

Pit 3 cut pit 2 and was filled with a dark brown grey mottled sandy silt (57). It was 0.7m wide at the top and was 0.95m deep. No finds were recovered.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 13 sherds with a total weight of 192g. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor and Oakley 1984; Mellor 1994), as follows:

OXR: St. Neots Ware, c. AD850–1200. 1 sherd, 1g.

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975–1350. 1 sherd, 1g.

OXBF: North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050–1400. 2 sherds, 9g.

WA38: Wallingford ware, AD1050–1250. 7 sherds, 118g

OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200–1600. 1 sherd, 1g.

MOD: Miscellaneous modern wares, 19th - 20th century 1 sherd, 62g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region, and indicates that there was activity at the site in the earlier part of the medieval period. The sherds are in the main quite small, but in good condition, indicating that they are likely to be reliably stratified, but the products of secondary deposition.

Other finds by Ceri Falys

One piece of bovine talus was uncovered from the modern made ground (50). Seven other fragmentary pieces of animal bone were recovered from Pit 2, 52 (sample 2), of which two pieces were identified as bovine phalanges and another as the hinge of a bovine jaw. Five pieces of undeniable bone were uncovered from Pit 1, 51 (sample 1).

Oyster shell was uncovered from both the made ground and pit 1 (51). Two fragments weighing 12g were recovered from pit 1 (51) with a third piece (<3g) from sample 1.

One piece of ceramic tile was unstratified and weighed 92g. Two smaller fragments of ceramic tile were uncovered from Pit 1, 51 (sample 1) (<10g).

Two ferrous nails were uncovered from Pit 1, 51 (sample 1) both weighing 5g and 4g respectively.

Environmental sampling by Joanna Pine

Two bulk samples of 20L of soil were taken from pits 1, (51) (sample 1) and 2, 52 (sample 2) for the recovery of environmental remains and small artefacts. The samples were floated and sieved using a 0.25mm mesh. Small artefacts were collected using a 5mm mesh. Though unidentified wood charcoal was recovered from both samples, neither contained identifiable seed pods or charred seed remains.

Conclusion

The watching brief has revealed the presence of a number of pits certainly or probably of medieval date. The full extent of the pits could not be established within the confines of the foundation trench but the remainder of these features survived below the formation level of the new foundations.

References

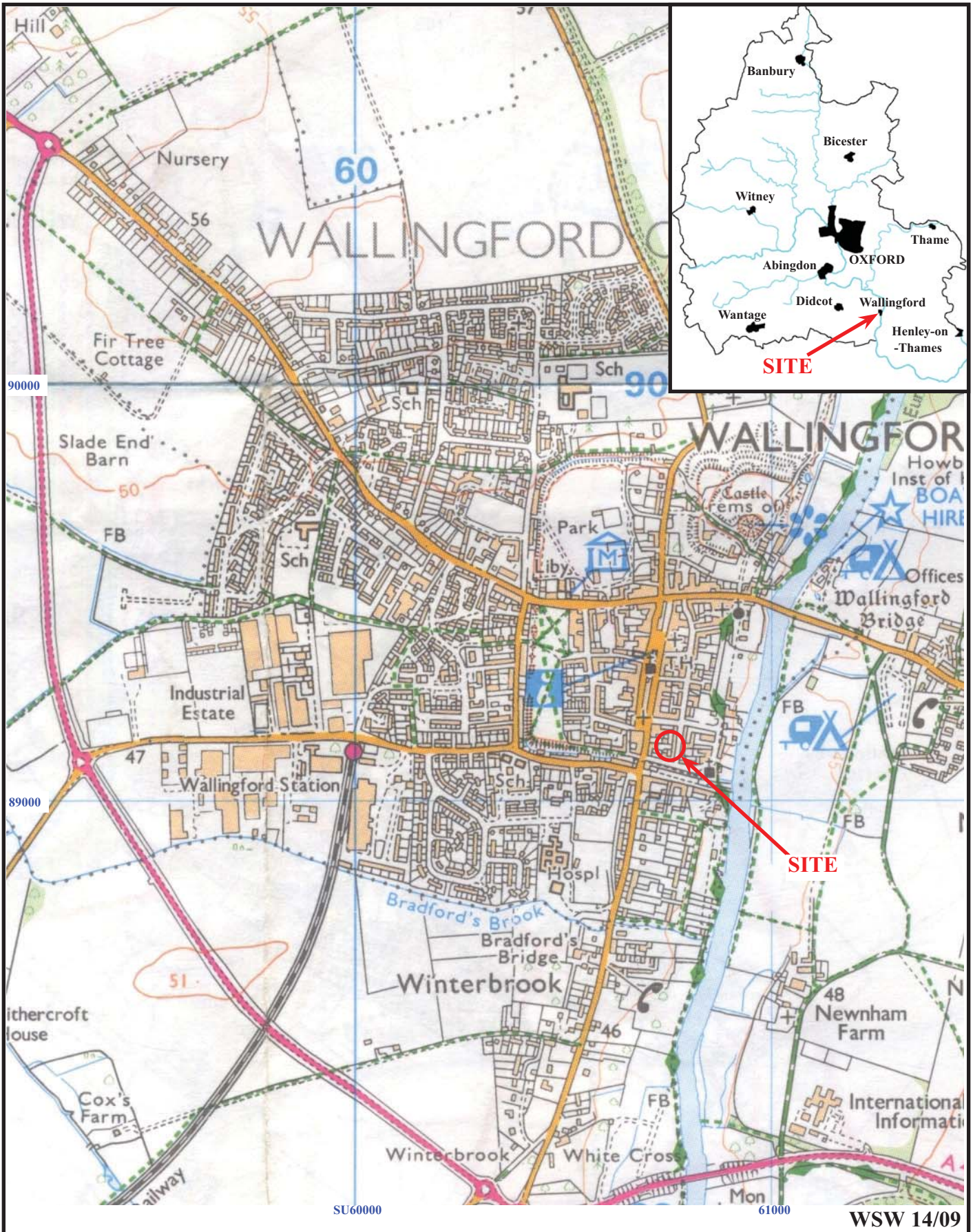
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APPENDIX 1: Feature catalogue.

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
-	50	Made ground	Modern pottery
1	51	Pit	Medieval pottery
2	52-6, 58	Pit	Medieval pottery
3	57	Pit	Later than pit 2

APPENDIX 2: Pottery catalogue by context, sherd no and weight in g.

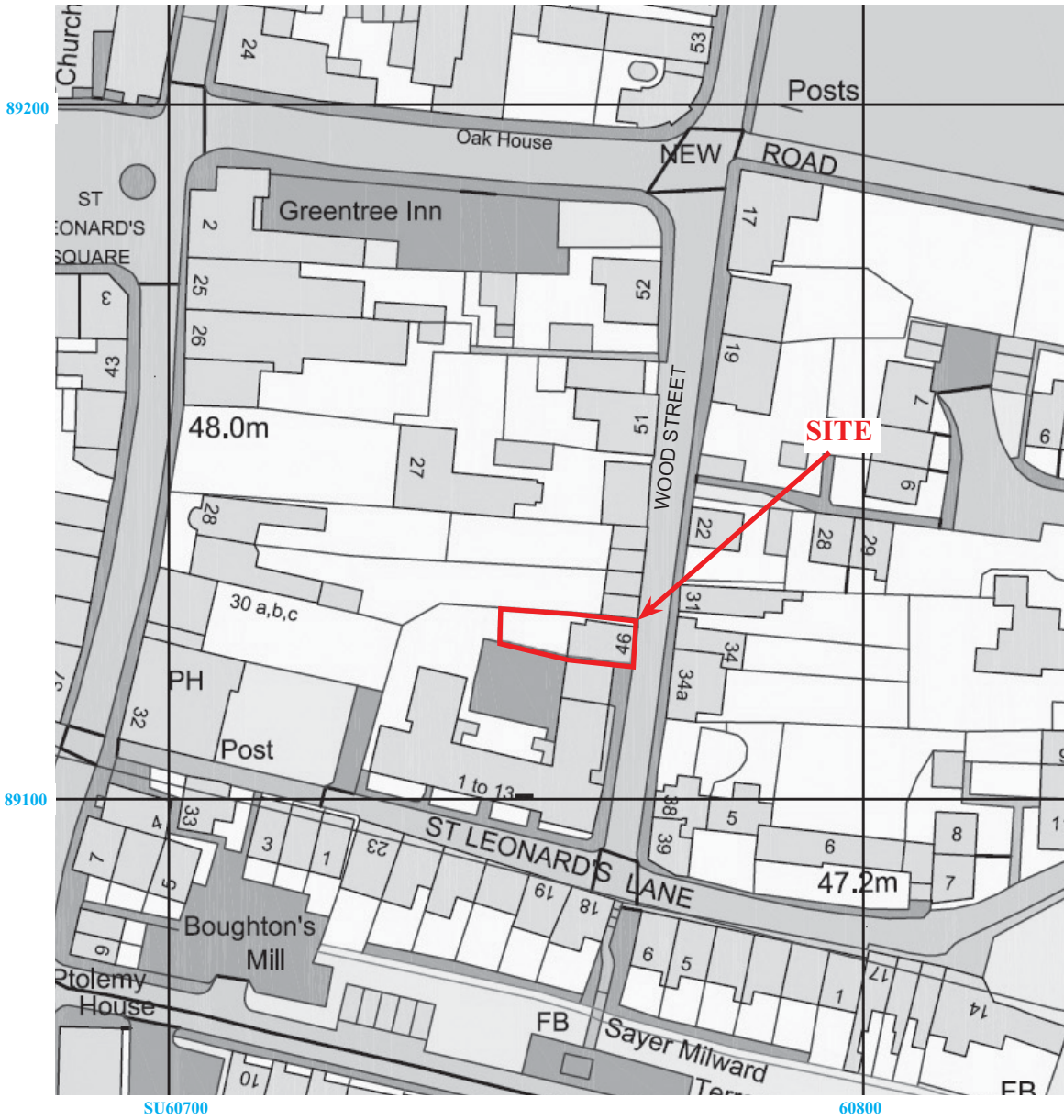
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>OXR</i>		<i>OXAC</i>		<i>OXBF</i>		<i>WA38</i>		<i>OXAM</i>		<i>MOD</i>	
		<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
	U/S	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	50	-	-	-	-
	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	62
1	51	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	7	1	1	-	-
2	52	-	-	-	-	1	7	2	59	-	-	-	-
2	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
	Total	1	1	1	1	2	9	7	118	1	1	1	62



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Figure 1. Location of site within Wallingford and Oxfordshire

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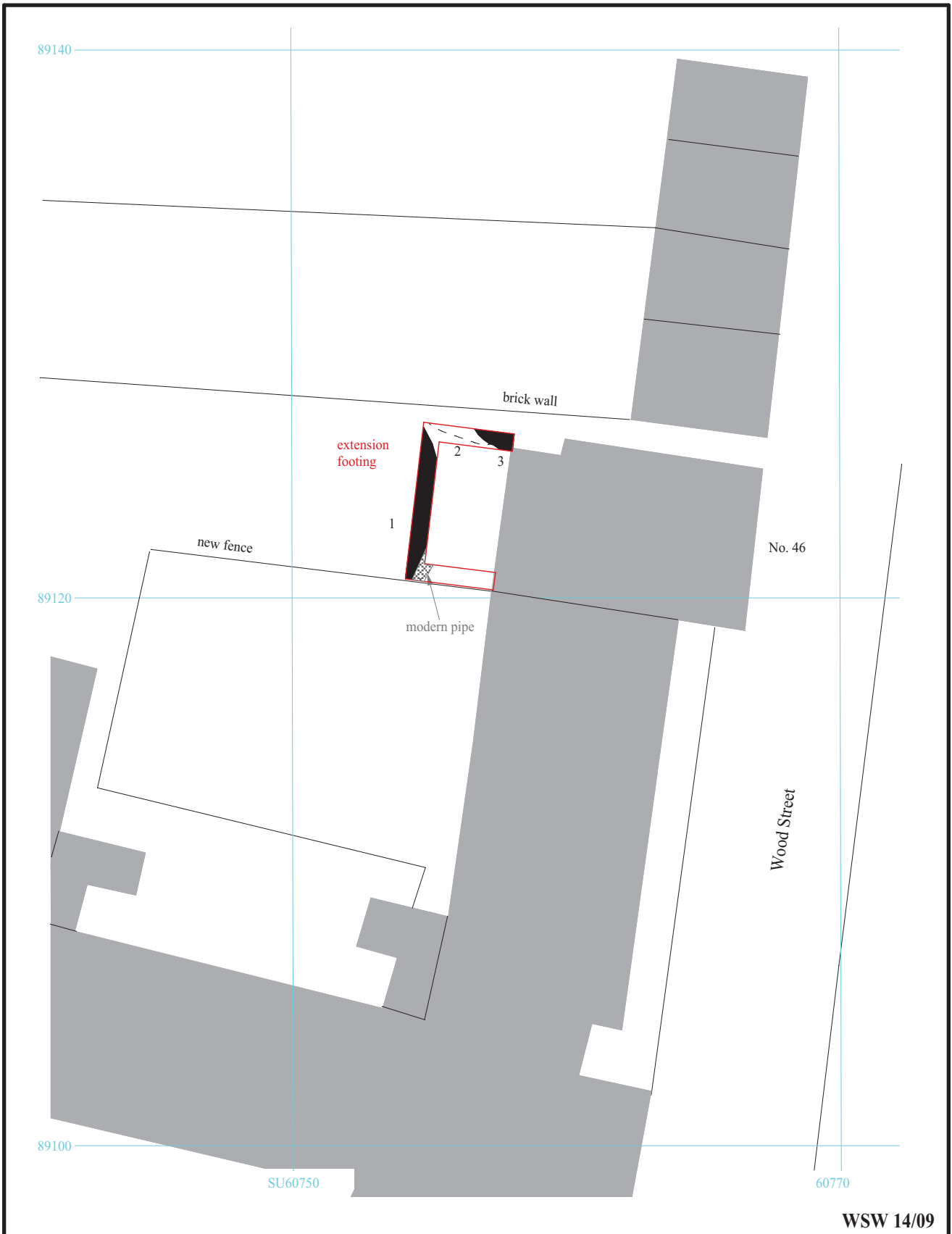


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Wood Street.

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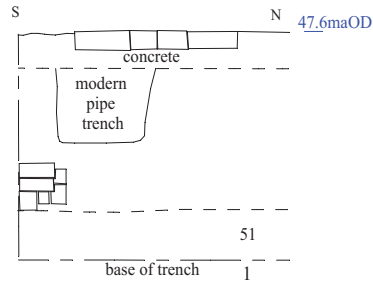
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Figure 3. Location of observed area.

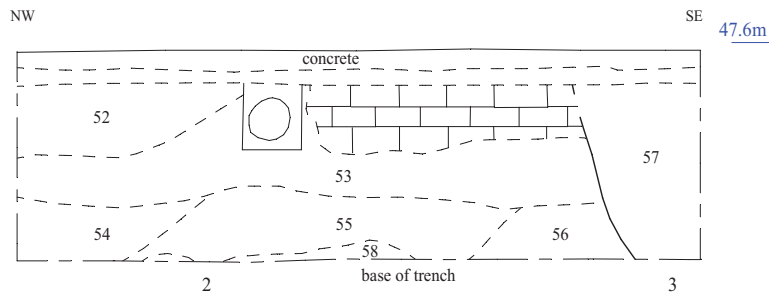


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West foundation trench (south end only)



North foundation trench



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Figure 4. Sections

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Plate 1. Corner of new footing, darker fill (51) under overburden (50), looking south west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. South facing section, showing cut 2 and 3, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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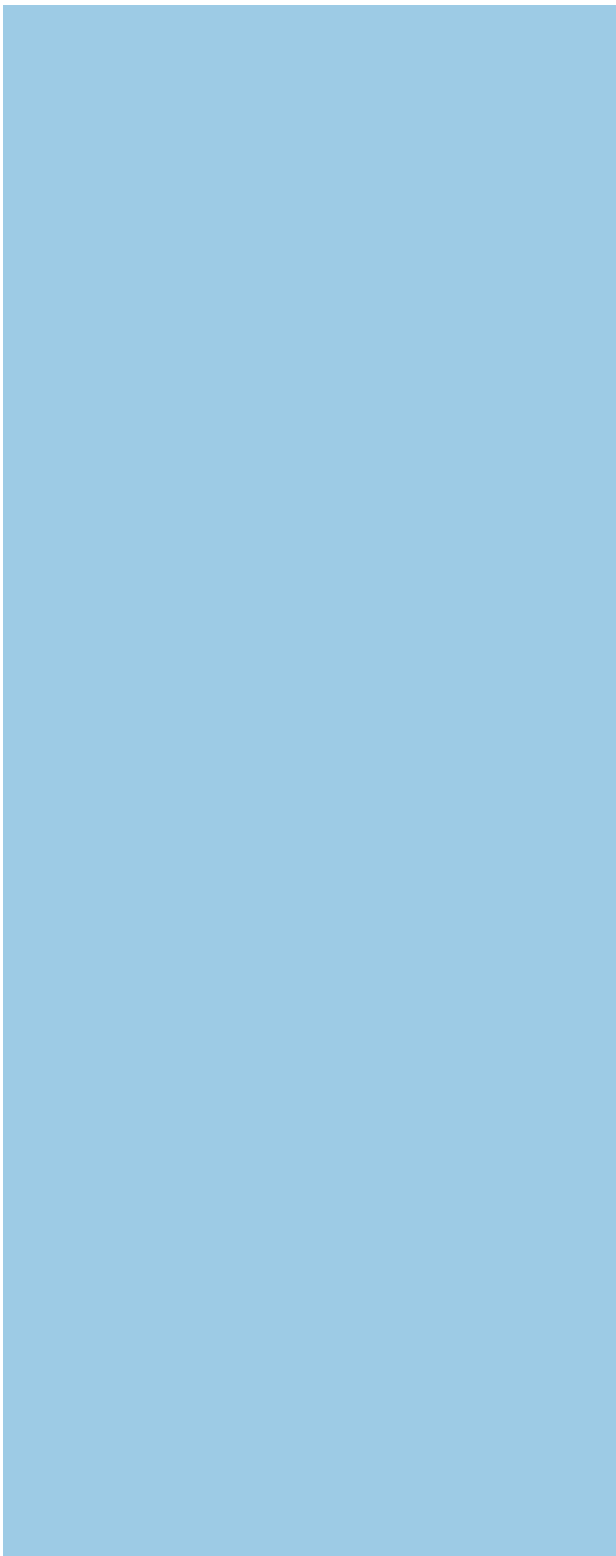
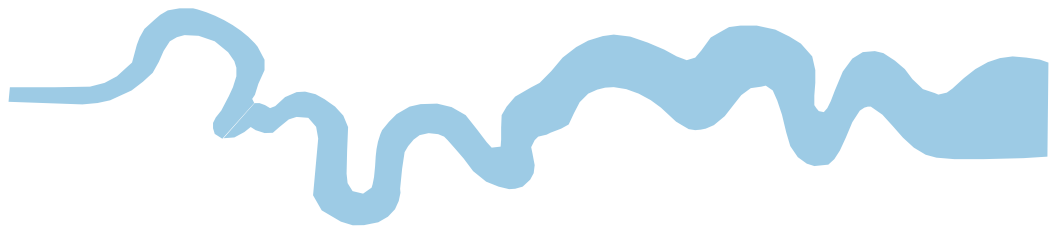
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Plates 1 - 2.

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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





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