

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land adjacent to Middle Green Farm, Baulking,
Faringdon, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Mundin

Site Code: MGF21/167

(SU 3168 9107)

**Land adjacent to Middle Green Farm, Baulking,
Faringdon, Oxfordshire- Access Road Works**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for Ms A J Reid

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MGF 21/167

August 2021

Summary

Site name: Land adjacent to Middle Green Farm, Baulking, Faringdon, Oxfordshire – Access Road Works

Grid reference: SU 3168 9107

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 19th and 20th July 2021

Project coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Andrew Munding

Site code: MGF 21/167

Area of site: 1.95ha

Summary of results: A new track to provide access to a proposed house development was monitored. Apart from in test pits, ground reduction did not expose the natural geology and no archaeological deposits were observed but a modern drainage ditch was noted. A spread of pottery with dates ranging from late Saxon through to post-Medieval was recovered

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

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Land adjacent to Middle Green Farm, Baulking, Faringdon, Oxfordshire-Access Road Works An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Report 21/167

Introduction

This report documents the partial results of an archaeological watching brief carried out a new access road for land adjacent to Middle Green Farm, Baulking, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, SN7 7QE (SU 3168 9107) (Fig. 1). The works were commissioned by Ms Jessica Reid, c/o Greenside Barn, Baulking,, Oxfordshire, SN7 7QE.

Planning permission (18/V0721/FUL) has been gained from Vale of the White Horse District Council for the construction of a pair of semi-detached properties, with new access leading to the plot crossing The Green from Baulking Lane. The consent is subject to two conditions (7 and 8) relating to archaeology, which require the securing and implementation of an archaeological watching brief during ground works. This was in accordance with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the District's Council's policies on archaeology. The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by Mr Steven Weaver, Planning Archaeologist of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, based on a brief supplied by him (Weaver 2021).

The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin between 19th and 20th July 2021. The site code is MGF 21/167. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

The development was to take place in two parts with construction of the access road to be followed at a later date by construction of the new house. This report considers only construction of the access road. This report presently considers only the results produced by the construction of the access road. As such, this report alone does not meet the requirements of Condition 8, a further report for which will be needed on the remaining works to ensure Condition 8 is met in full.

Location, topography and geology

Baulking is a dispersed settlement in the claylands of the Vale of White Horse, c.2km north-east of Uffington and c.5km south-east of Faringdon (Fig. 1). The site is west of Baulking Lane, adjacent to the extensive 20ha Green (Fig. 2). The site is located north-east of an early-mid 19th century pair of cottages (James Cottage and Painters Cottage, both Grade II listed, and south of 19th-century Middle Green Farm. The village lies a short

distance south of the River Ock. The underlying geology is Lower Greensand (silt, clay and sandstone) (BGS 1971). The site lies at c.88m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service Weaver 2021). Baulking ('Badelancing') was a chapelry of Uffington from AD948, when King Eadred of Wessex (AD946-955) granted five hides to his 'servant' Cuthred, therefore attaching it to the Benedictine Abbey Church of St Mary's, Abingdon (VCH 1924). There is also extensive later Medieval evidence (ridge and furrow) of the settlement's medieval open field system that lies in fields adjacent to the existing village and the site itself (Weaver 2021).

The village contains a number of historic buildings, with the historic centre presumably at the 13th-century church of St Nicholas (Grade I Listed, 1048680) to the south. Another key property in the village would be the site of the manor, possibly north of the church, with the extant later medieval or post-Medieval Manor Farm further north (Tyack *et al.* 2010, 153). Documentation suggests a settlement was in existence from Saxon times until 1187, when manorial control passed to Kingston Lisle (VCH 1924). Settlement earthworks are said to exist north of the church, with possible house platforms and drainage ditches traversing the Green between the road and the west boundary (Dyer 1976). Little other archaeological works associated with modern development have occurred in the village itself.

Further afield, the Upper Thames Valley area is archaeologically rich, 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). Roman and Iron Age pottery sherds have been found on Baulking Hill, c.1km north east of the site. Oldfield Farm, c.2km east was thought to have a standing sarsen stone, of potential prehistoric origin. The environs of the Upper Thames region are rich in archaeology of prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman date, with developing evidence particularly of settlement in upland areas of the Corallian ridge as at Faringdon (Weaver and Ford 2004; Cook *et al.* 2005; Sanchez 2021) and Kingston Bagpuize (Parrington 1976; Cowell 1979; Moore 2000).

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 the permanent monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in this case for the construction of the access road.

Results

The Access Road

Excavations were undertaken with a 360° excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide bladed bucket. Spoilheaps and exposed stripped surfaces were monitored for all finds.. The access road was *c.* 6m wide and 65m long (Fig. 3).

Test pits

Three test pits were initially dug along the route of the access track (Fig.3).

Test pit 1

Test pit 1 sampled the eastern portion of the proposed access track. It was dug to a depth of 0.4m. The stratigraphy comprised 0.25m of dark brown grey topsoil above *c.* 0.13 of a reddish-brown silty clay subsoil. This gradually diffused from the subsoil to the top of the natural geology, a brown, light grey sandy clay (Pl.1). No features or finds were uncovered.

Test pit 2

This test pit sampled the central portion of the proposed access track, adjacent to a slightly sunken area perpendicular to this new track. It was dug to a depth of 0.42m. The stratigraphy comprised 0.23m of topsoil above 0.15m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features or finds were uncovered.

Test pit 3

This test pit sampled a slight rise in the ground to the west, before a more defined slope to the ground towards the existing drainage ditch on its west side. It was dug to a depth of 0.4m (Pl. 2). The stratigraphy comprised 0.23m of topsoil above 0.15m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features or finds were uncovered.

Overburden strip (Pls 3 and 4)

Mechanical excavation along the access route took place in two phases, first removing topsoil (0.25m) then most, but not all of the subsoil deposits to a total depth of *c.* 0.4m. This did not penetrate to natural deposits and no archaeological deposits were recorded. However, at *c.*24m from the eastern end, a 4m long zone of the subsoil contained 37 pottery sherds. Two further sherds of pottery and one fragment of floor tile were recovered from a 1.5m extension to the edge of the existing drainage ditch on the strip's western edge. A modern golf ball was also within this deposit.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Thirty-nine sherds of pottery weighing 171g were collected from two subsoil contexts (Appendix 1). Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric.

Table 1. Pottery quantification by fabric.

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date range (AD)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt/g</i>	<i>eve</i>	<i>MNV</i>
OXB	Late Saxon Oxford ware	Late 8th-Early 11th century	1	2		1
OXAC	LSax-EMed West Oxfordshire ware	Late 9th-Mid 13th century	1	6		1
OXAQ	Med East Wiltshire ware	Mid 12th-Mid 15th century	34	151	0.15	28
MSW	Medieval sandy wares	12th-14th century	2	8		2
OXAP	Late medieval Brill/Boarstall type	15th-16th century	1	5		1
GRE	Glazed red earthenware	16th-18th century	1	5		1
<i>Totals</i>			39	171	0.15	33

Quantification was carried out using sherd count, weight, estimated vessel equivalent (eve) and minimum number of vessels (MNV). Medieval fabric codes were assigned from the Oxfordshire fabric series (Mellor 1994), with post-medieval wares based on the author's fabric series. Methods follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001) and form terminology follows MPRG (1998).

A single small sherd of Late Saxon Oxford shelly ware was recovered from subsoil. The most frequent medieval type was East Wiltshire ware, which in this case corresponds with the Newbury and Kennet Valley B wares (i.e. rounded limestone/chalk and flint with sand). The sherds contained more calcareous inclusions than flint, although in most cases this had been leached out. Two rims were present, both jar types (i.e; Mellor 1994, fig. 41.4 and Vince *et al.* 1997, fig. 35, no. 67). Additionally, of Medieval date (12th to mid-13th century?), was a rim fragment from a Cotswold-type (OXAC) jug or pitcher with a curving line of rounded stabmarks externally on the rim. There were two body sherds in a medieval sandy ware of unknown source, pale orange in colour and with sparse fine sand inclusions in a silty matrix.

One sherd of Brill/Boarstall-type late medieval ware was found, in a hard-fired reduced fabric with internal green glaze. This was found in association with a post-medieval redware body sherd with internal orange glaze, possibly Coombe type, although there were numerous small manufacturers of this type in the region. The late medieval and post-medieval sherds came from the edge of the strip next to the west drainage ditch.

Ceramic tile

One fragment of ceramic tile, likely floor tile, was recovered from the top of the exposed deposit near the existing drainage ditch on the west side of the new access track strip. It cannot be dated but is likely post-medieval.

Conclusion

The groundwork for the access track did not penetrate below the subsoil and no cut features were encountered. However, a cluster of small and abraded pottery sherds was recovered from the subsoil which contained one sherd of Late Saxon pottery and several more of Medieval date. These likely accumulated during the use of the land for agricultural purposes.

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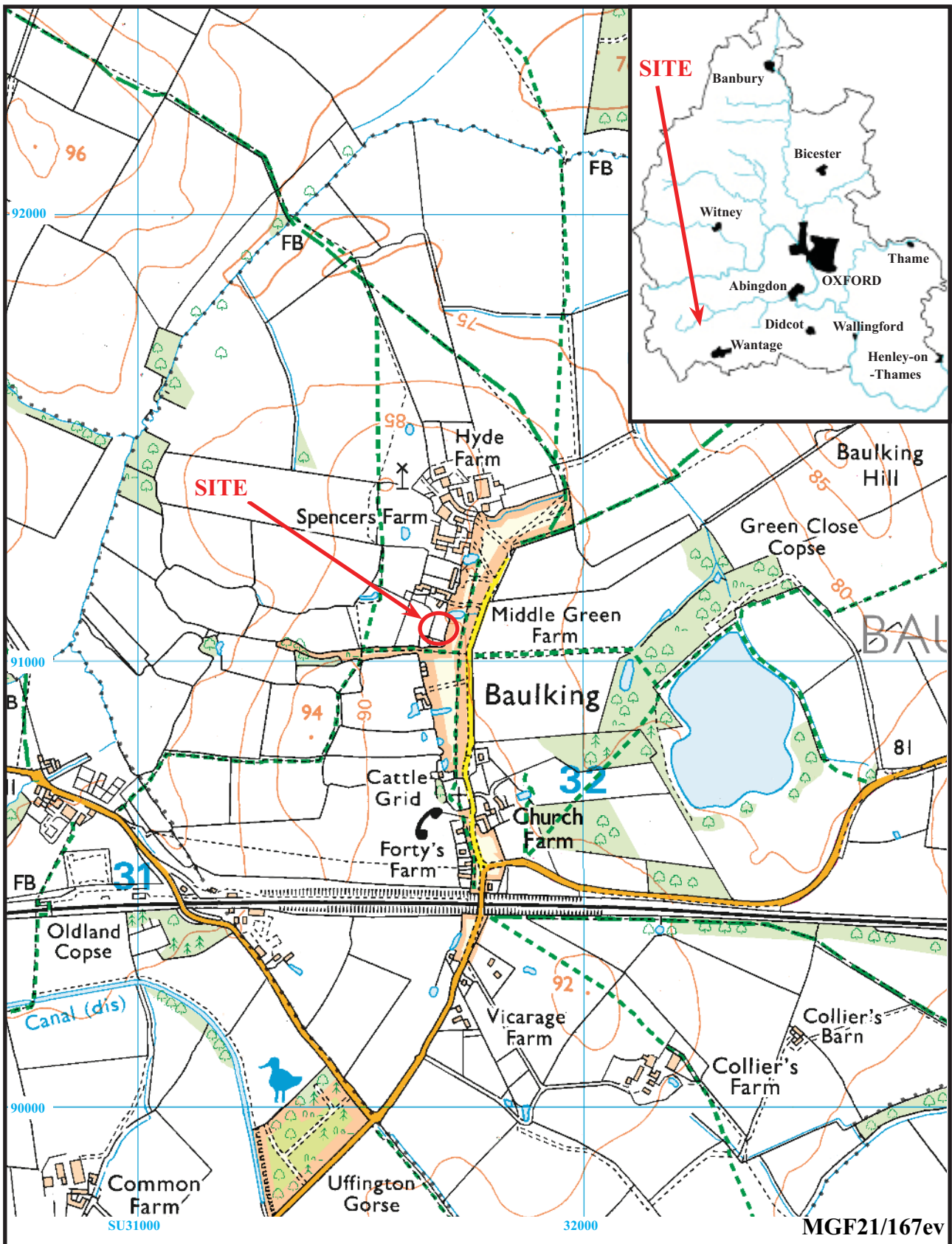
APPENDIX 1: Pottery catalogue

<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt/g</i>	<i>MNV</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Spot date (century AD)</i>
Subsoil centre	OXB	U	1	2	1				L8-E11
Subsoil centre	OXAC	R	1	6	1	JG?	FLAR	moderate-common leached calc, sparse flint, v little sand	12-M13
Subsoil centre	OXAQ	U	10	51	10			moderate-common leached calc, sparse flint, moderate vfs	M12-M15
Subsoil centre	OXAQ	U	4	21	1			moderate leached calc, sparse flint, common fs	M12-M15
Subsoil centre	OXAQ	U	13	36	12			v little flint	M12-M15
Subsoil centre	OXAQ	U	3	10	1			v little flint	M12-M15
Subsoil centre	OXAQ	R	1	7	1	JR	UPTHFT	v little flint	M12-M15
Subsoil centre	OXAQ	B	1	11	1			moderate-common leached calc, sparse flint, moderate vfs	M12-M15
Subsoil centre	OXAQ	R	1	9	1	JR	UPFTBD	outer edge of rim mostly lost	M12-M15
Subsoil centre	MSW	U	2	8	2			oxid fs - sparse fs in silty matrix	12-14
Subsoil west	OXAP	D	1	5	1			vfs reduced int & ext, v hard fabric sim to LMR	15-16
Subsoil west	GRE	D	1	5	1			Combe?	16-18

Type: U/D – undecorated/decorated body sherd; R – rimsherd; B - base.

Form: JR – jar; JG - jug.

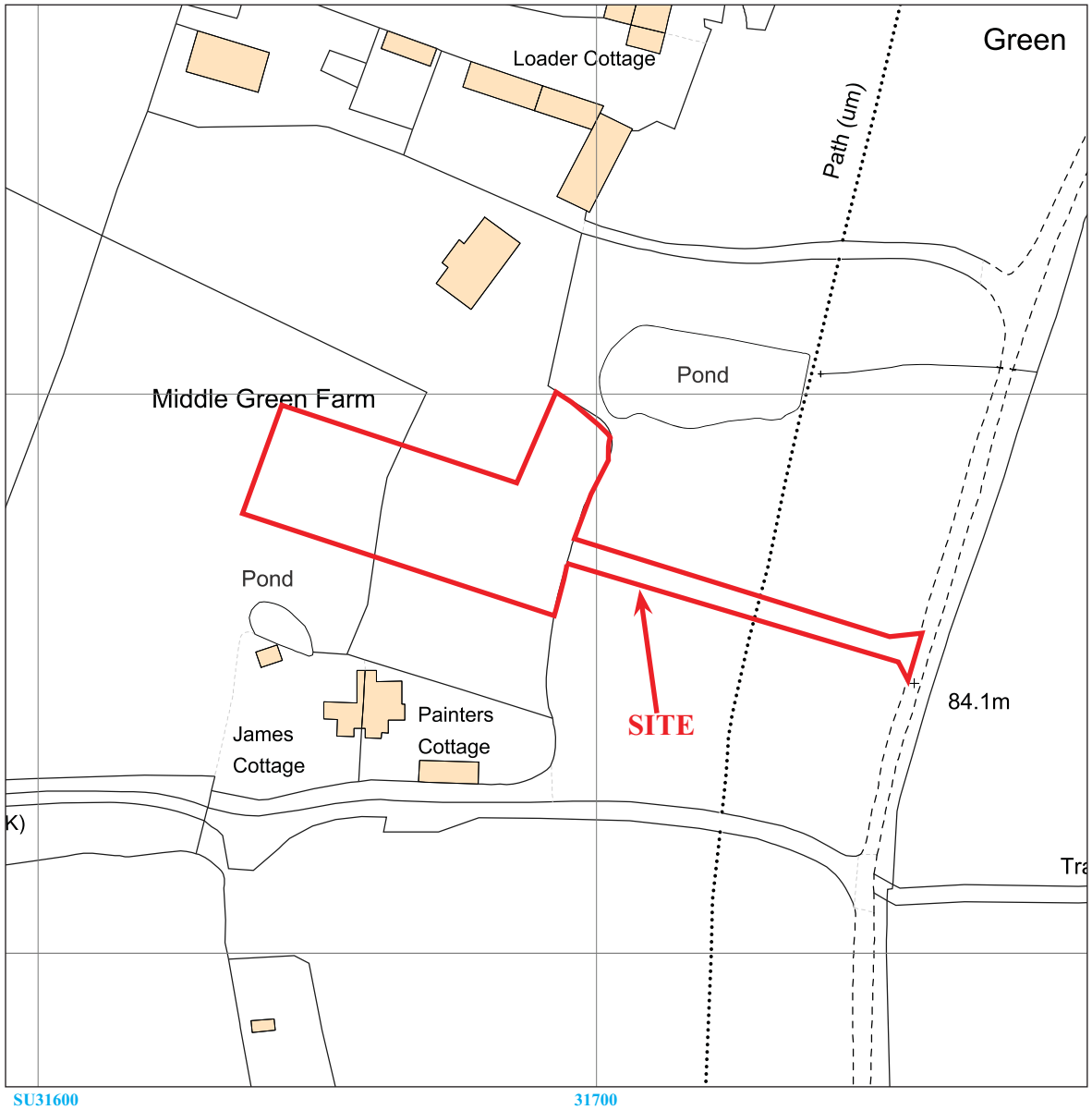
Rim: UPFTBD – upright flat-topped beaded; UPTHFT – upright thickened, flat top; FLAR – flaring.



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Figure 1. Location of site within Baulking and Oxfordshire.

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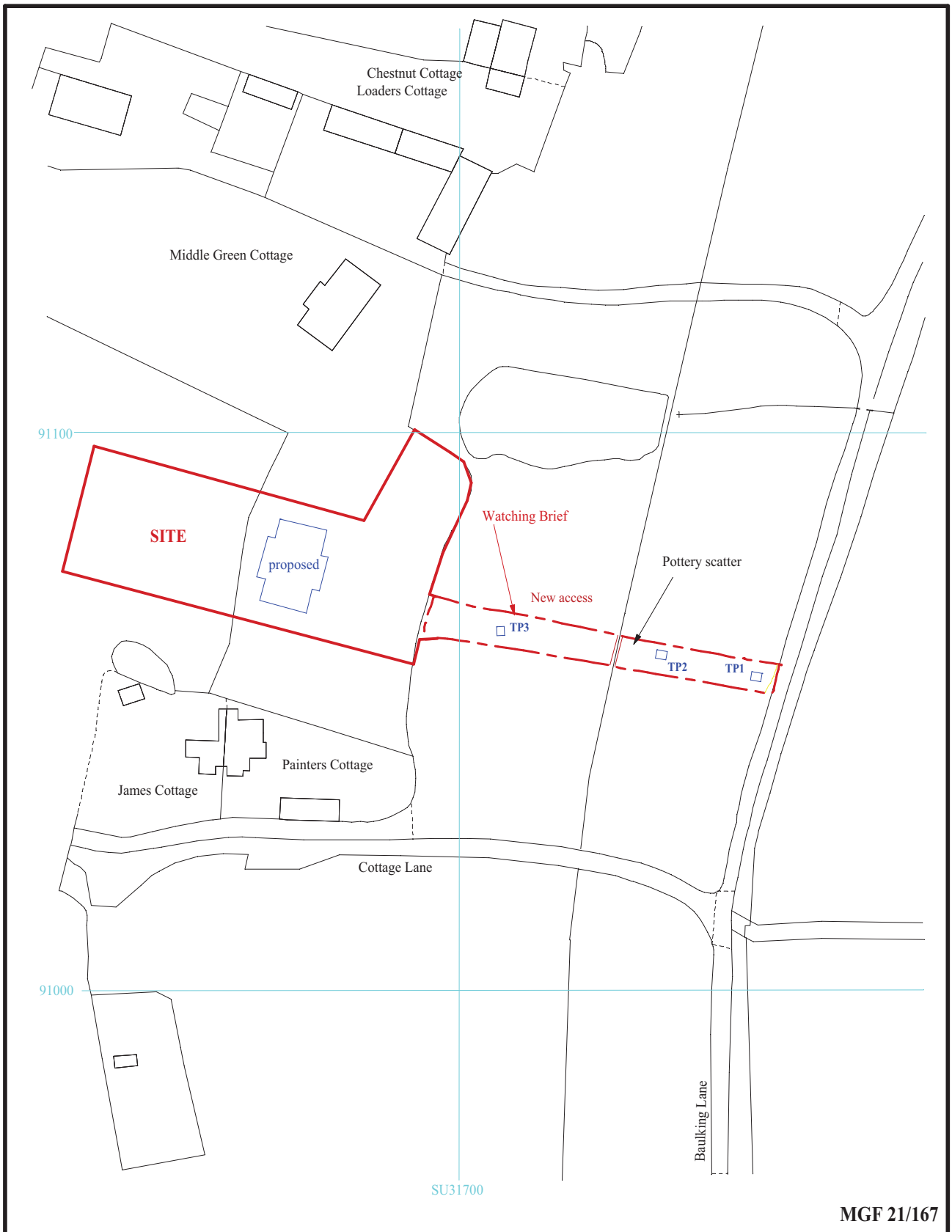
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Baulking Lane.

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.





Plate 1. Test pit 1, looking North,
Scales: horizontal: 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Test pit 3, looking North North West,
Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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**Land adjacent to Middle Green Farm, Baulking,
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Plates 1 and 2**

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Plate 3. Eastern portion of new access from Baulking Lane, looking West,
Scales: horizontal: 1m x2, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Western portion of new access towards Middle Green Farm, looking North West,
Scales: 1m x2, vertical 0.3m.

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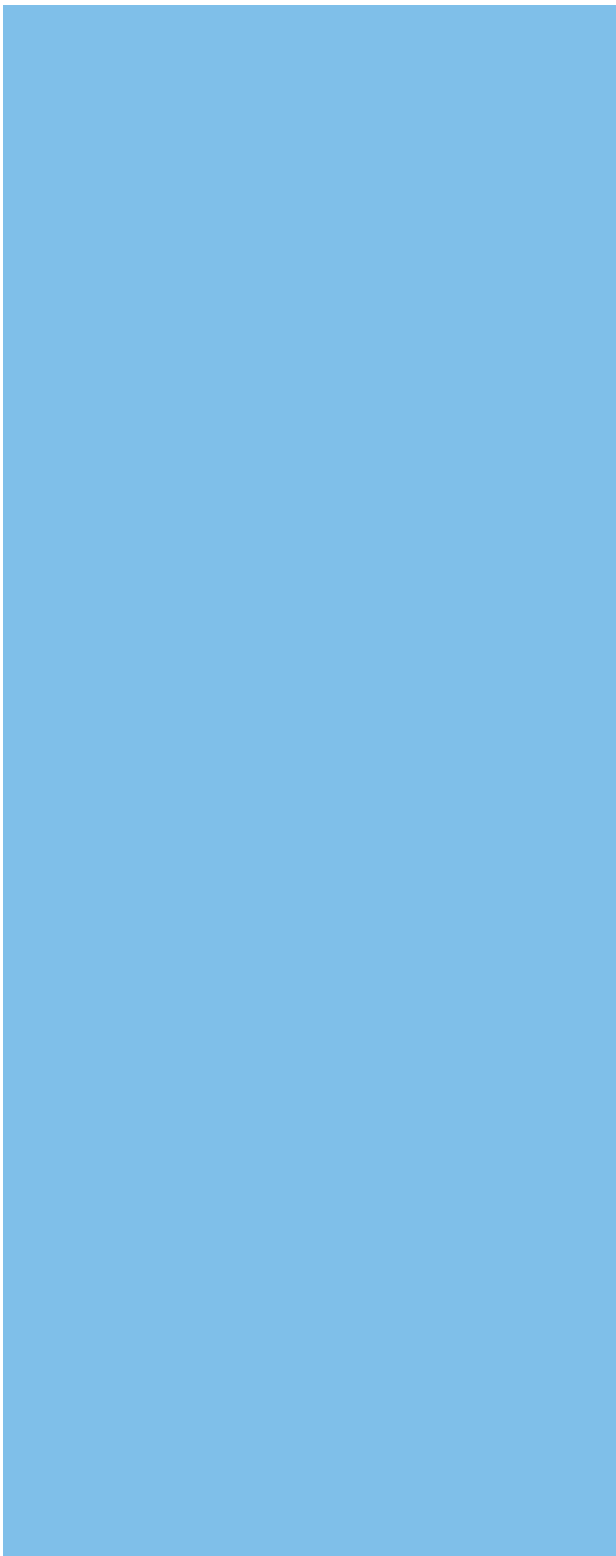
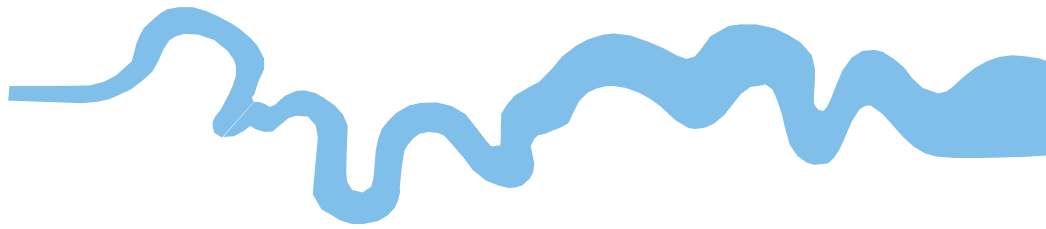
**Land adjacent to Middle Green Farm, Baulking,
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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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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