

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Rush Court Gardens, Shillingford Road,
Shillingford, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Site Code: RGS22/73

(SU 6058 9162)

**Rush Court Gardens, Shillingford Road,
Shillingford, Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Stuart Argent

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RGS 22/73

September 2022

Summary

Site name: Rush Court Gardens, Shillingford Road, Shillingford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 6058 9162

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20th September 2022

Project coordinator: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Maisie Foster

Site code: RGS 22/73

Area of site: c. 400 sq m evaluated within overall site of over 1.2ha

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological interest were observed in the trenches. Up to 1m of made ground and Victorian backfill was recorded which could suggest a degree of landscaping, which may have removed any archaeological features. The area is therefore considered to have low archaeological potential.

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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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 26.09.22
	Steve Preston✓ 26.09.22

Rush Court Gardens, Shillingford Road, Shillingford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Report 22/73

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Rush Court Gardens, Shillingford Road, Shillingford, Oxfordshire (SU 6058 9162) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Stuart Argent of the above address.

Planning permission (P21/S3648/FUL) has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council for the demolition of an existing dwelling and erection of a new dwelling. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeology, two conditions (3 and 4) have been attached to the consent relating to archaeology, requiring archaeological evaluation and based on its results, potentially further mitigation work. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019), and the Council's Local Plan policies.

The fieldwork was carried out according to a specification approved by Mr Steven Weaver, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council, the archaeological adviser to the District, and based on a brief supplied by him (Weaver 2022). The fieldwork was undertaken by Maisie Foster on 20th September 2022 and the site code is RGS 22/73.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south-eastern edge of Shillingford, just north of Wallingford, on the south bank of the River Thames in south Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The small sub rectangular parcel of land is on a slight incline from north to south going from a height of 50m to around 46m above Ordnance Datum towards the river. The site is bounded by a small lane to the south and east, an access road to Rush Court Care Home and Brightwell Vineyard to the west and a house to the north (Fig. 2). The land is currently an open grassed garden (Pl. 4), with fruit trees to the south, and prior to this it is thought to have been an orchard. The underlying geology is mapped as Summertown-Radley Terrace deposits (BGS 1980). The geology observed in both trenches was a firm silty clay with gravel inclusions.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Weaver 2022). In summary the site's archaeological potential stems from its location in the archaeologically rich Thames Valley. Sites of many periods have been recorded by both aerial photography and fieldwork, principally in advance of mineral extraction in this area (Benson and Miles 1975; Booth *et al.* 2007; Lambrick *et al.* 2000). The site itself lies adjacent to the late 17th-century Rush Court Manor, which is known to overlie an earlier Medieval moated manor. Parts of the moat to the west and north still survive (Figs 1 and 2). The deserted medieval settlement of Clapcot which is documented in Domesday Book of AD1086 (Williams and Martin 2002) lies to the south and may extend as far as the current site.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present, due to the location of the site in the environs of the medieval manor and deserted medieval village;

- to determine if any late Saxon or medieval deposits are present; and

- to provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary.

Two trenches were to be dug using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and any other overburden was to be removed to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed would be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined above, without compromising the integrity of any feature that might warrant preservation *in situ* or be better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds and scanned with a metal detector.

Results

Both trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3) with only a slight movement of Trench 2 to avoid a water mains service trench. The trenches ranged from 14.0m to 14.1m in length and both were 1.2m deep and 1.8m wide. A

complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadth, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 2)

Trench 1 was aligned NNE - SSW and was 14.1m long and 1.2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted at the SSW end consisted of 0.22m of topsoil, overlying 0.22m of gravel which was above 0.16m of limestone, in turn above 0.26m of concrete capping for an old service pipe, which was cut into 0.23m of mid red brown silty clay back fill which contained iron horse shoes and Victorian bottles. This was overlying the natural geology. At the NNE end of the trench, 0.22m topsoil overlay 0.21m of subsoil which sat above 0.64m of mid red brown silty clay backfill. This was overlying the natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned ENE - WSW and was 14m long and 1.2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil, overlying 0.16m of subsoil which sat above 0.17m of chalk. This was above 0.57m of a mid red brown silty clay which contained brick/tile, Victorian glass bottles and a horse bit. This was overlying the natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were observed.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

The evaluation has successfully investigated the site. No finds or features of archaeological interest were observed in the trenches despite the area's high potential for archaeological remains. The observation of nearly 1m of made ground and backfill suggest a degree of landscaping to the area probably during the Victorian period (from finds observed in the trenches backfill) that could potentially have removed any archaeological features that were ever present. The area is therefore considered to have low archaeological potential.

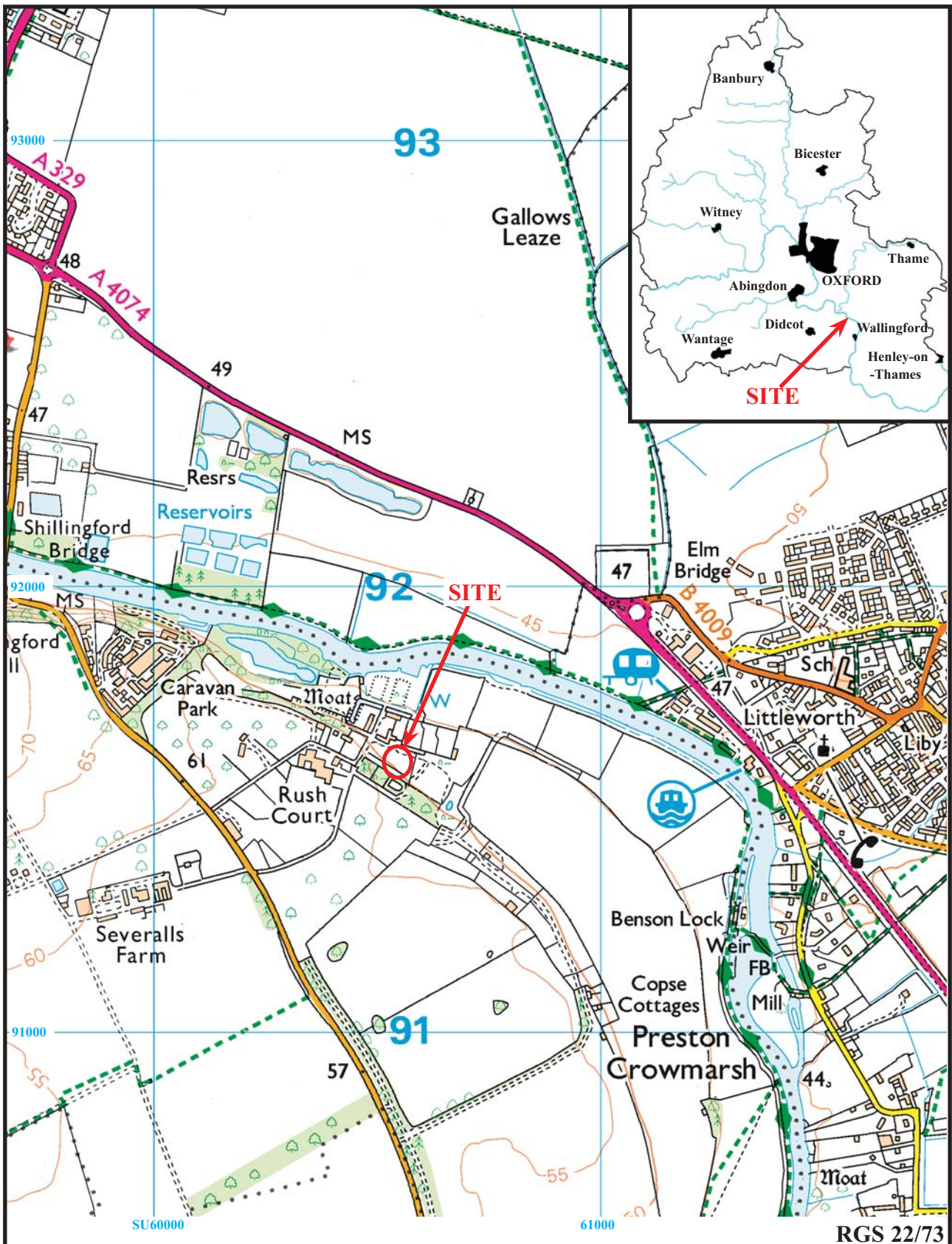
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- Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at NNE and ENE end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	14.1	1.8	1.2	SSW end: 0-0.22m Topsoil; 0.22-0.42m Gravel; 0.42-0.58m Limestone; 0.58-0.84m Concrete encasing an old service pipe; 0.84-1.07m mid red brown silty clay; 1.07m+ clay with gravel (natural geology). NNE end: 0-0.22m Topsoil; 0.22-0.43m mid red brown silty clay subsoil; 0.43-1.07m mid red brown silty clay backfill; 1.07m+ clay with gravel (natural geology) [PIs 1-2]
2	14	1.8	1.2	0-0.17 Topsoil; 0.17-0.33m Subsoil; 0.33-0.5m Chalk; 0.5-1.06m mid red brown silty clay backfill; 1.06m+ clay with gravel (natural geology) [PI. 3]

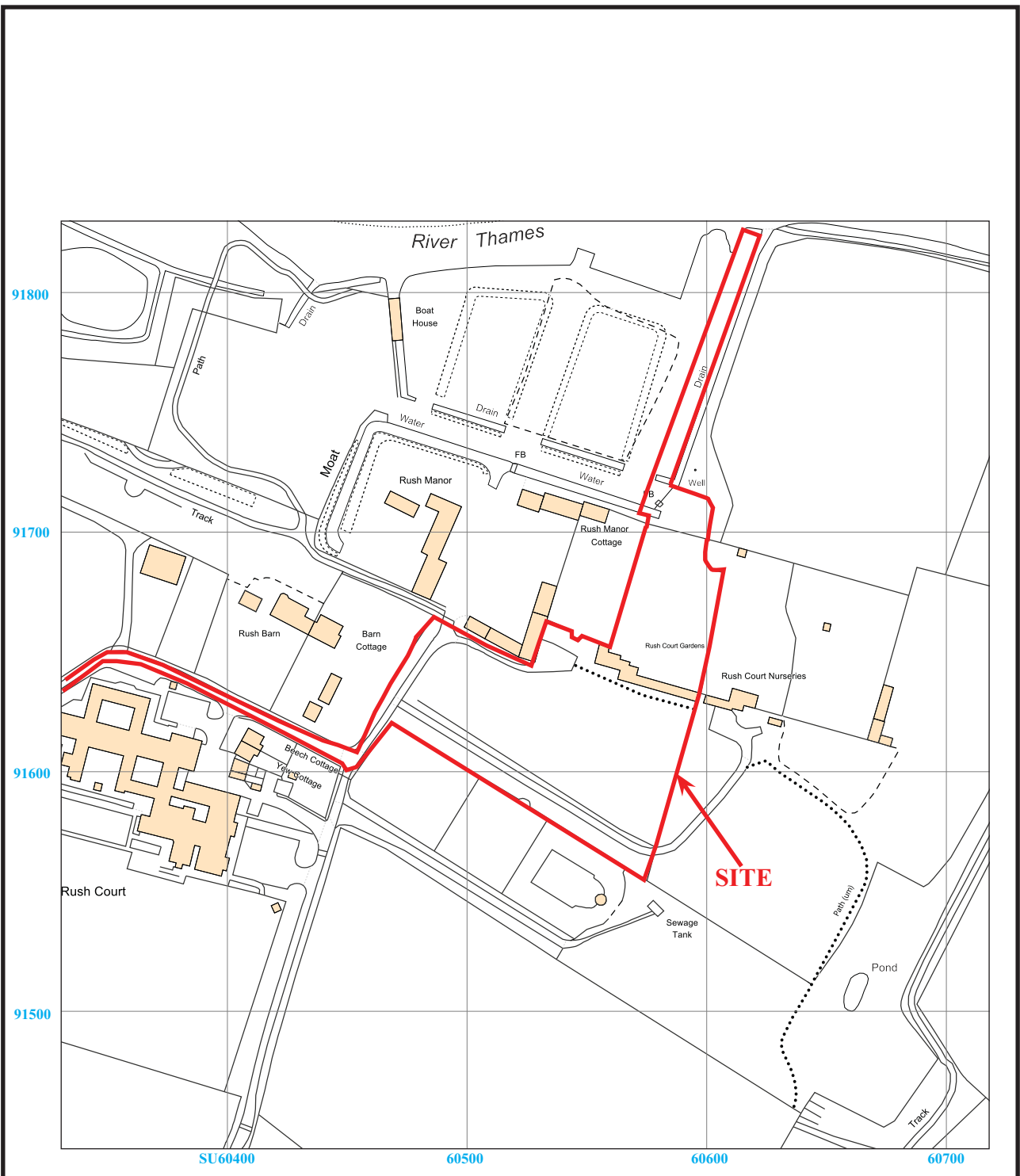


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Figure 1. Location of site at Rush Court and within Oxfordshire.

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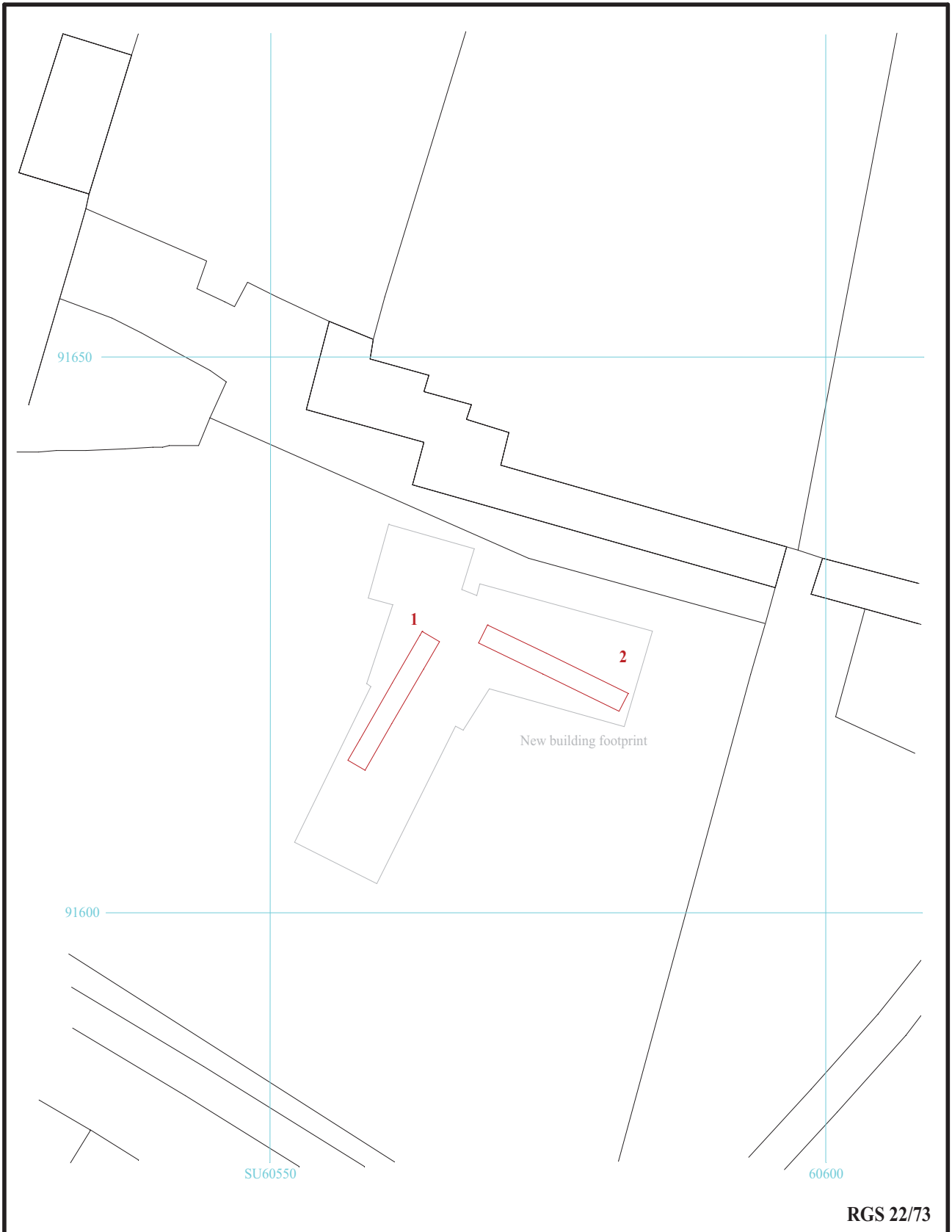
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site at Rush Court.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches, and outline of proposed development.



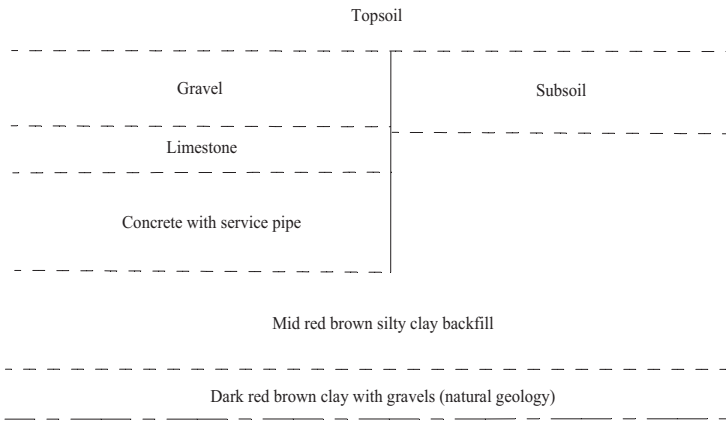
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Trench 1

SSW

NNE

46.1maOD

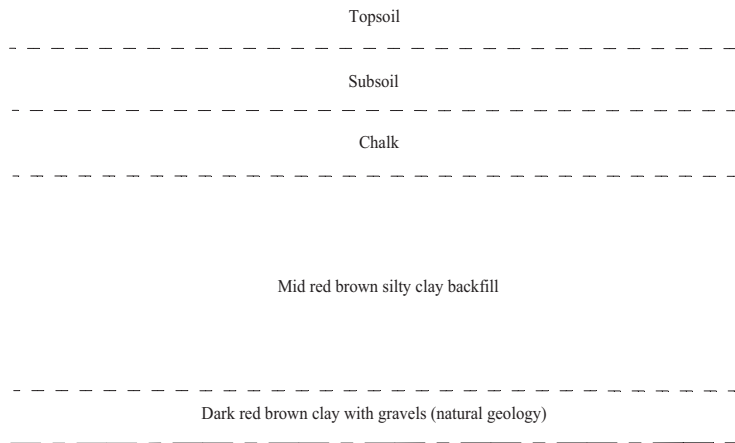


Trench 2

ENE

WSW

45.86m



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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Trench sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking South West,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 1 section, looking North West,
Scales: 2m and 0.5m.



Plate 3. Trench 2, looking West,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Site Shot looking North West.

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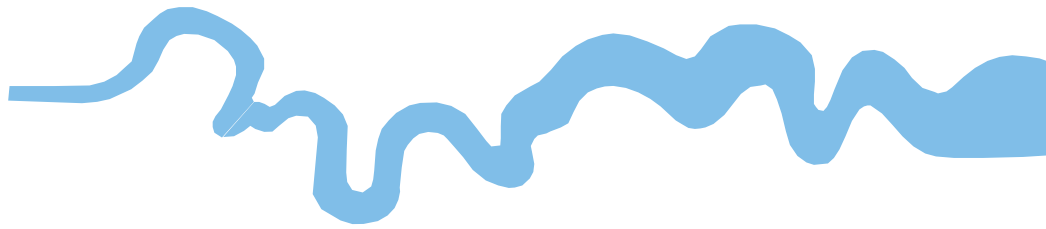
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Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 to 4.**

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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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