

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
S E R V I C E S

**Beenhams Cottage, Railway Lane,
Littlemore, Oxford**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Jamie Lewis

Site Code: BCL11/43

(SP5358 0268)

Beenhams Cottage, Littlemore, Oxford

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mrs J Hall

by James Lewis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code BCL11/43

May 2011

Summary

Site name: Beenhams Cottage, Railway Lane, Littlemore, Oxford

Grid reference: SP5358 0268

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 11th May 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James Lewis

Site code: BCL 11/43

Area of site: 0.1ha

Summary of results: One undated gully, possibly a modern garden feature was identified but no artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 19.05.11 Steve Preston✓ 18.05.11

Beenhams Cottage, Railway Lane, Littlemore, Oxford An Archaeological Evaluation

by James Lewis

Report 11/43

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Beenhams Cottage, Railway Lane, Littlemore, Oxford (SP5358 0268) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Janine Fowler of Fowler Architecture and Planning Limited, 19 High Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5AF, on behalf of Mrs J. Hall.

Planning permission is being sought from Oxford City Council for the construction of three new houses on the site following demolition of the existing structures. The site is located within the historic core of Littlemore village and close to known deposits of archaeological interest. In order to provide information upon the potential impact of the development on archaeological deposits, the results of an archaeological evaluation are required to accompany the planning application.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and Oxford City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, Oxford City Council Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis on 11th May 2011 and the site code is BCL11/43. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museum Service.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the centre of the village of Littlemore which itself is located on the southern edge of Oxford City to the south of the ring road (A4142) (Fig. 1). The site is located on a road junction and roads define the north, east and southern limit of the proposed development while to the south-west are residential buildings (Fig. 2). Further to the south-west is the River Thames which flows within 900m of the site, and the Littlemore Brook is 500m to the south-east. To the north, east and west are the suburbs of Oxford. The underlying geology is Beckley Sands (BGS 1994). Sand and calcareous sandstone were observed in both trenches. The site is at present a wooded garden and cottage and lies at a height of 69.7m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Littlemore. At the University Science Park to the south-east, evidence for Roman industry and Saxon settlement has been found (Moore 2001). The areas to the south and south-east of Oxford are notable for the large numbers of Roman pottery kiln sites, whose products were traded widely across southern England (Young 1977). At Littlemore Hospital, Roman pottery and kilns were found and a range of medieval deposits have been recorded adjacent to the parish church (Ford 1995). Fieldwork to the south on Sandford Road uncovered medieval deposits. An evaluation and watching brief undertaken immediately to the south-west of the site revealed deposits dating to the post-medieval, Medieval and Roman periods (Lewis and McNicoll-Norbury 2009; Munding 2009). However a small evaluation at Lanham Lane, close by to the south-east revealed nothing of interest (Lewis 2010).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

The specific aims of the project were:

- To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- To determine if any deposits relating to Roman pottery production are present; and
- To determine if any deposits relating to Medieval or early Post-Medieval Littlemore are present.

It was proposed to dig two trenches 10m long and 1.6m wide using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket. The trenches were to be excavated under constant archaeological supervision either down to the natural geology or until archaeological features were encountered. All archaeological deposits were to be hand cleaned, excavated and recorded. All spoil heaps were to be monitored for artefacts and metal detected.

Results

Two trenches were dug. However, due to the restrictive presence of trees and services, Trench 1 had to be relocated from its intended position and its length reduced (Fig. 3). Both trenches were 1.6m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. A summary of the feature excavated forms Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned north–south and measured 5.0m long and 0.51m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.32m of topsoil directly above the natural geology of Beckley sands. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were found in this trench.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4 and Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned SSW–ENE and measured 10.0m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil, above 0.06m of subsoil which overlay the natural geology. A single curvilinear gully (1) was recorded at the south-western end of the trench. The gully extended from the south-eastern side and turned and continued beyond the western end. It measured approximately 1m long, 0.29m wide at the top and was between 0.33–0.42m deep, becoming more shallow as it continued west. It contained a single fill (53) of brown sand with occasional natural rounded stone inclusions. No finds were recovered from this feature. The trench could not be widened to examine this feature further due to the presence of live services. If circular, the gully would have had a diameter of only 2.5m, too small to be any significant structure such as a barrow ring gully or roundhouse and is probably a modern garden feature.

Conclusion

The evaluation found only a single markedly curved gully which contained no dating evidence. It was located at the south-west edge of the site which is in close proximity to an adjacent land plot which was archaeological examined but returned very limited results (Lewis and McNicoll-Norbury 2009; Munding 2009). No artefacts of archaeological interest were revealed anywhere on the site. It is considered therefore that the site has no archaeological potential.

References

- BGS, 1994, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 237, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, B, 1995, 'Sandford Road, Littlemore, Oxford: an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 95/43, Reading
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- Moore, J, 2001, 'Excavations at Oxford Science Park, Littlemore, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, **66**, 163–219
- Munding, A, 2009, 'Beenhams, Railway Lane, Littlemore: an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services, rep 07/83b, Reading
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich
- Young, C J, 1977, *The Roman Pottery Industry of the Oxford Region*, BAR Brit Ser **43**, Oxford

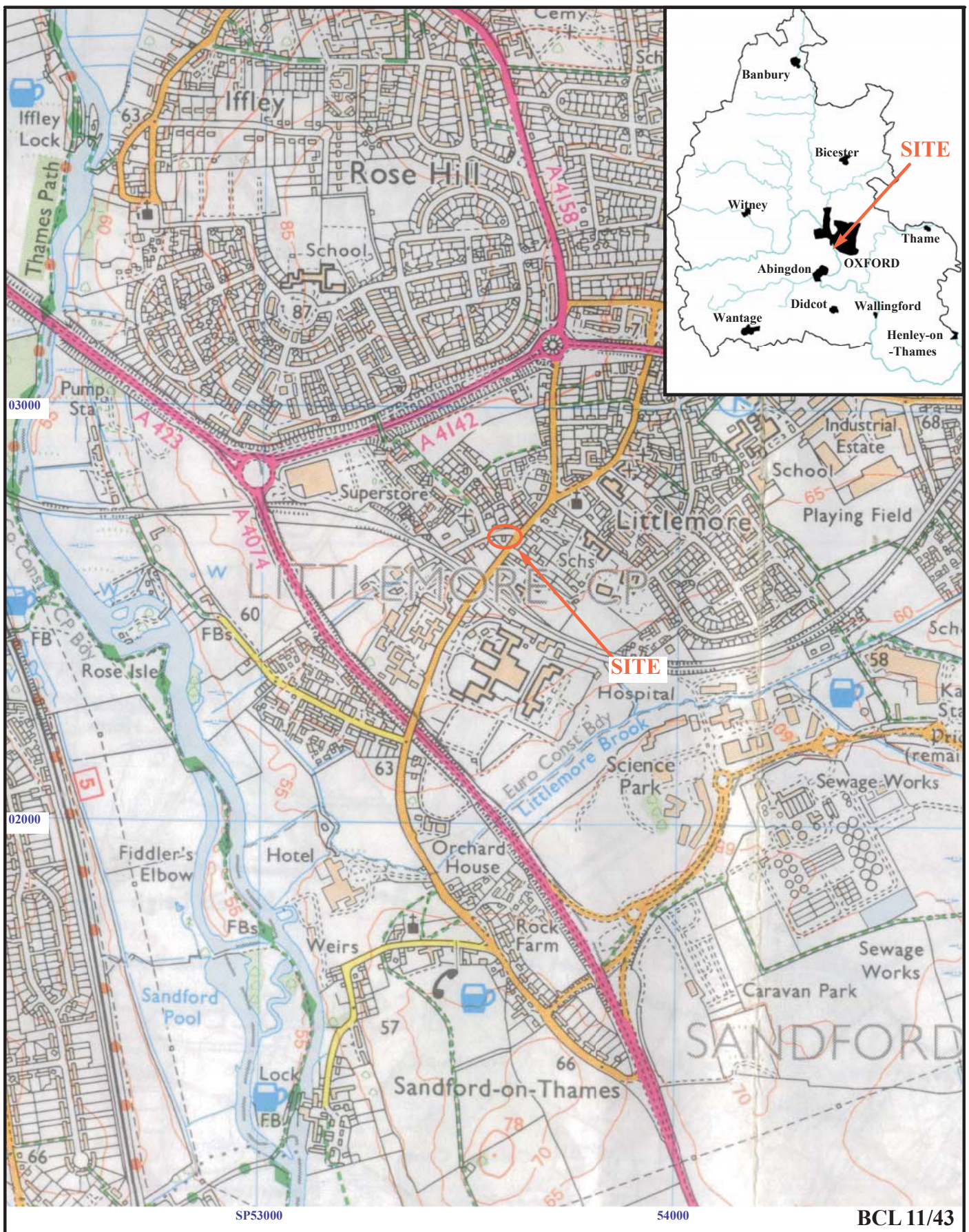
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at WSW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	5.0	1.6	0.51	0-0.32m topsoil, 0.32+ natural geology. [Plate 1]
2	10.0	1.6	0.5m	0-0.26m topsoil, 0.26-0.32m subsoil, 0.32m+ natural geology. [Plate 2]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

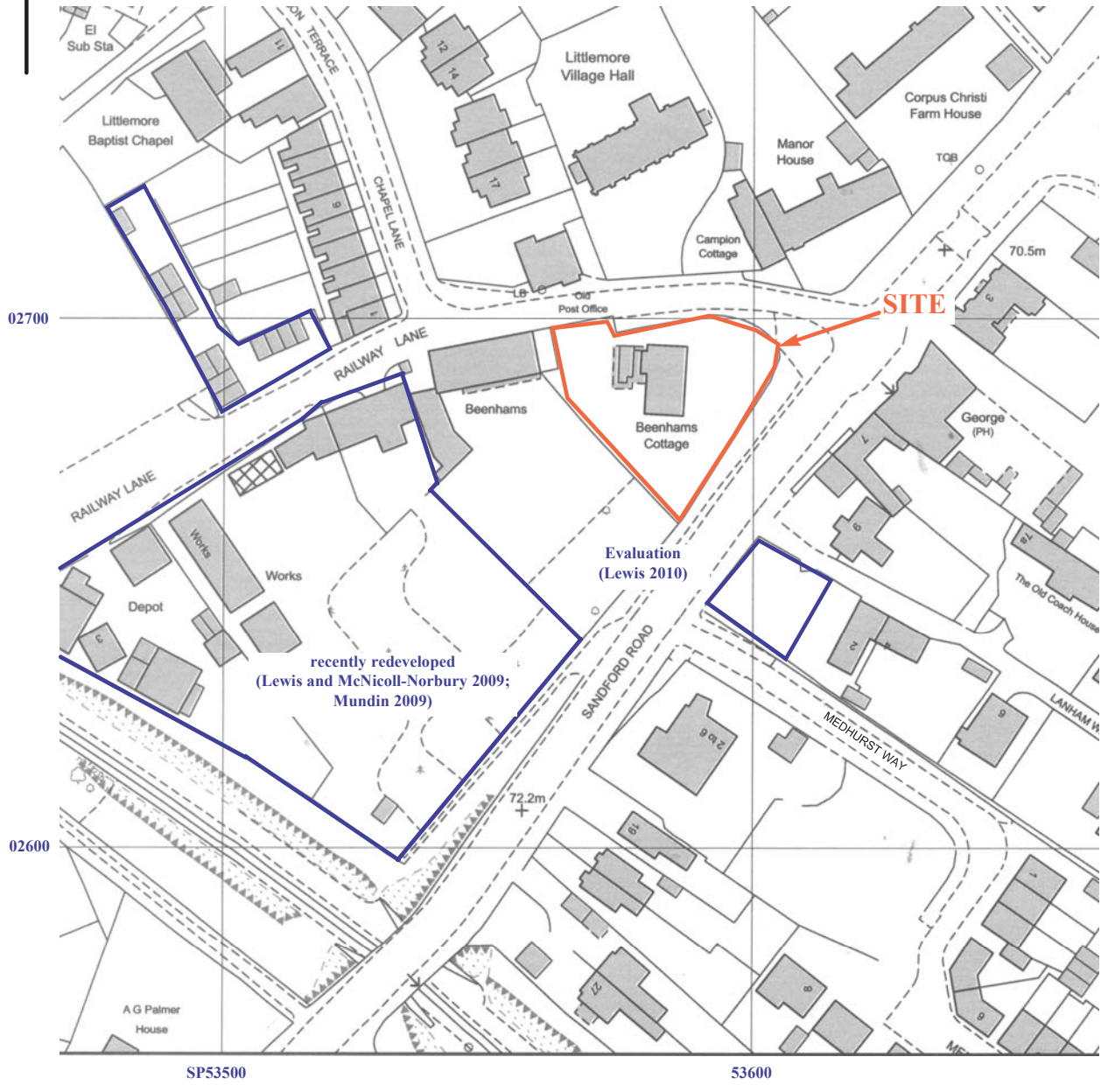
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	53	Gully	unknown	none



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Oxford, 2011
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Littlemore and in Oxford and Oxfordshire.

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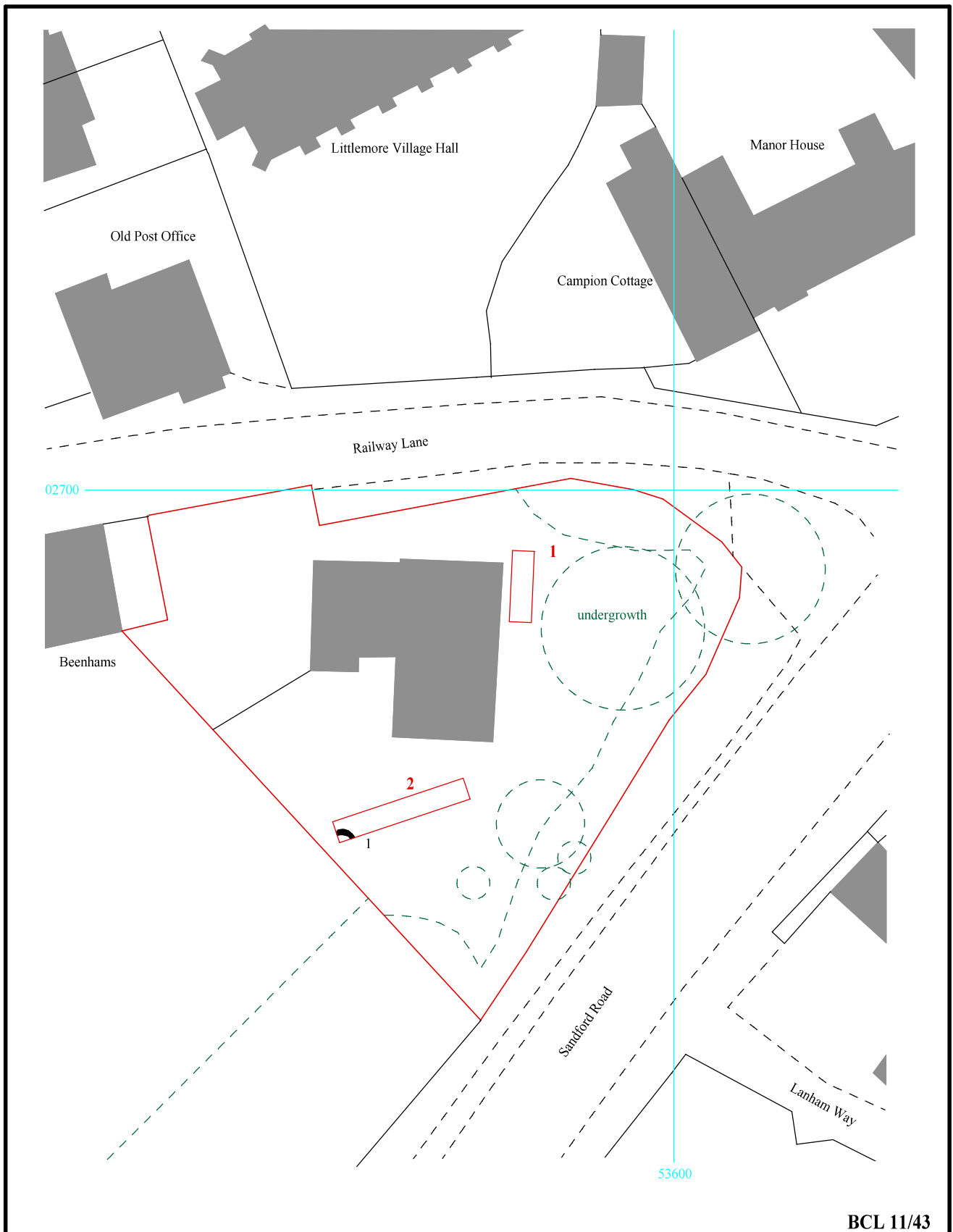
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Oxford, 2010
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Railway Lane.

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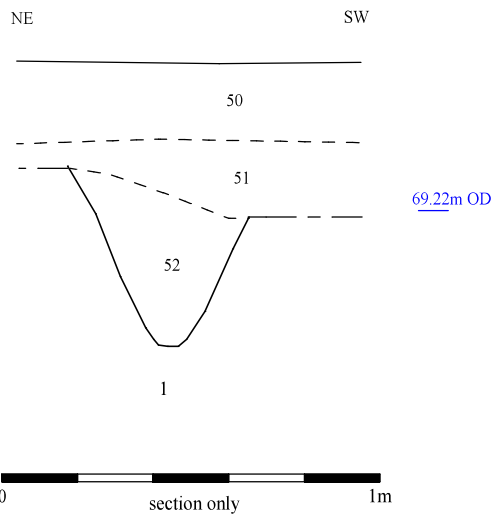
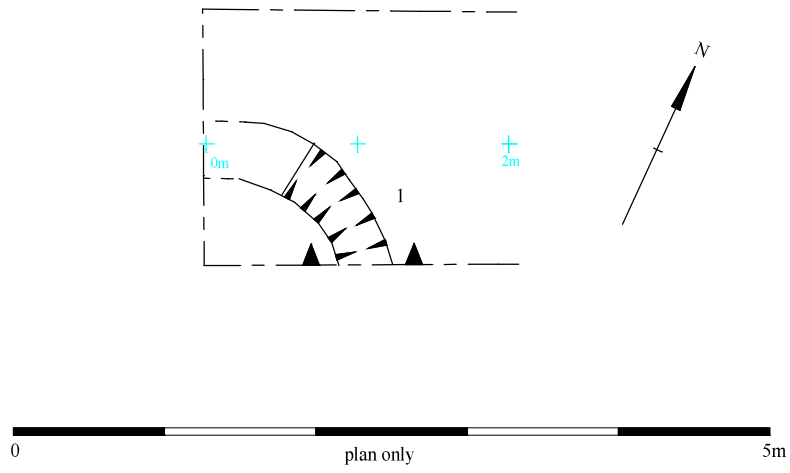
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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Trench 2



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Figure 4. Details of Trench 2.

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north. Horizontal Scales: 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking south-west. Horizontal Scales: 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m

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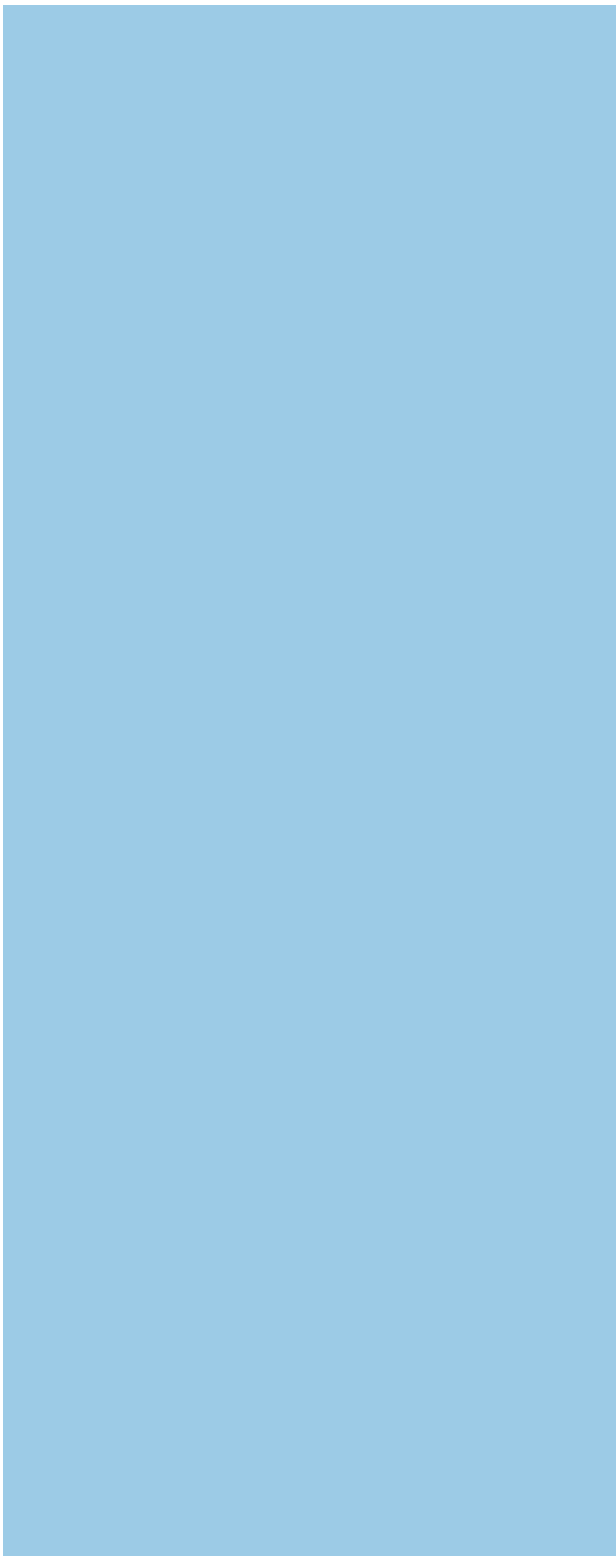
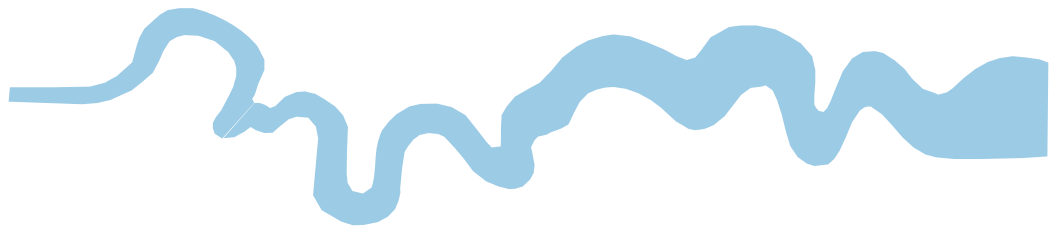
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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