

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

**25 High Street, Haddenham,
Buckinghamshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Taylor

Site Code: 25HSH11/47

(SP 7396 0850)

**25 High Street, Haddenham,
Buckinghamshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr John Rose

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

SiteCode25HSH11/47

May 2011

Summary

Site name: 25 High Street, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SP 7396 0850

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 25th May 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: 25HSH 11/47

Summary of results: A ditch and gully of early medieval date and an undated pit were recorded. A single fragment of Bronze Age pottery was also found

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

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Report edited/checked by: | Steve Ford ✓ 31.05.11 |
| | Steve Preston ✓ 31.05.11 |

25 High Street, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 11/47

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 25 High Street, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire (SP 7396 0850) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr John Rose of 25 High Street, Haddenham.

Planning permission is to be sought from Aylesbury Vale District Council to construct a new house and convert a barn to residential use on a plot of land at 25 High Street, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire. The application is to be accompanied by the results of a field evaluation. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Eliza Alqassar, Archaeological Planning and Conservation Officer with Buckinghamshire County Council, advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Matt Gittins on the 25th May 2011 and the site code is 25HSH11/47. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the east side of the High Street of Haddenham and backs on to Stockwell. It is surrounded by residential properties and is currently occupied by the garden of no. 25 (Fig. 2). Haddenham itself is located between Thame and Aylesbury with the river Thame to the north. The underlying geology is mapped as Purbeck Sand Formation (BGS 1994), which consisted of non-marine limestone with marl and clay. This was observed in both trenches. The site lies at a height of *c.*75m above Ordnance Datum. A small stream in the adjacent plot to the north is now canalized and avoids the current site (Fig. 2). However, the projected line of this stream would have traversed the proposal site north-south and it is possible that this was its natural course.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Haddenham. A detailed summary of Haddenham as a whole has recently been produced by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCC 2008). Until recently Haddenham had had relatively little archaeological work carried out within it. It has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book (as *Nedreham*), but has little documented history of note. However, topographically, it is of unusual plan with three greens and four ponds. A desk-based assessment (Preston 2007) and field evaluation (Weale 2007) for the immediately adjacent parcel of land revealed a post-medieval building on the street frontage, medieval pits and an infilled stream channel. A further evaluation to the north at Townend revealed a complex of medieval deposits (Wallis 2007) whereas a third, nearby, revealed nothing of archaeological interest (McNicoll-Norbury 2011).

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.

Specific aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to determine whether archaeological deposits relating to Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval settlement are present.

Two trenches were to be dug, one measuring 10m in length and the other 15m. Overburden was removed using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed was to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might better be investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

The two trenches were dug as intended and measured respectively 10m and 14.8m in length and were 1.05m and 1.20m deep (Fig. 3). Both 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.

Trench 1 (Figs 4 and 5; Plates 1 and 2)

This trench was aligned west-east and measured 1.20m in length and 1.20m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.32m of turf/topsoil overlying 0.74m of subsoil. This overlay 0.11m of a mid grey clayey silt overlying the natural geology, which was a sandy clay with small limestone patches. The mid grey clayey silt may represent part of a buried soil or possibly comes from flood deposits from the nearby stream. Two archaeological features were revealed, a gully (2) and a very shallow pit (3) adjacent to it. A slot was dug across both features in order to examine the relationship between them, but this could not be determined. The gully measured 0.22m deep and contained five sherds of medieval pottery along with one clearly residual Bronze Age sherd. A single piece of fired clay and eight pieces of animal bone including cow teeth were also recovered. Sieving of a soil sample from this deposit produced charred cereal grain as well as wood charcoal. The pit measured 0.60m wide and 0.07m deep but no finds were recovered from this.

Trench 2 (Figs 4 and 5)

This trench was aligned WNW–ESE and measured 10.00m in length and 1.05m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.31m of turf/topsoil overlying 0.74m of subsoil overlying a limestone gravel at the south eastern end with a sandier clay at the north western end. This located a single ditch. A slot (1) was dug across this ditch and revealed it was 2.20m wide and 0.60m deep and contained two fills. Its upper fill (52) was a dark grey brown clayey silt. It contained two sherds of medieval pottery, 71 pieces of pig bone and an iron object, possibly a weight. Its lower fill (53) was a light brown grey silty clay. No finds were recovered but sieving of a soil sample from this deposit also produced charred cereal grain as well as wood charcoal.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 8 sherds with a total weight of 58g. It was all of early medieval (late 11th – 12th century) date, other than a single small and probably prehistoric sherd. All the post-Roman pottery is typical of the traditions of the City of Oxford and its hinterland. None of the wares are covered by the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat *et al.* 1994), and therefore the pottery codes used are those of the Oxfordshire type-series (Mellor 1994), as follows:

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975–1350. Oolitic-limestone tempered ware, manufactured at a number of unknown sources to the west of Oxford. 1 sherd, 4g.

OXBF: North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050 – 1400. Flint, sand and limestone tempered ware, probably from a source near Newbury, Berks. 1 sherd, 11g.

OXY: Medieval Oxford ware: Late 11th – 14th century. Oxfordshire fabric OXY ((Mellor 1994). Abundant sub-angular quartz with some rounded clay pellets and occasional polycrystalline quartz. Glazed tripod pitchers common. 5 sherds, 39g.

In addition, gully 2 (54) produced only a single small and very abraded sherd (4g) with burnt flint temper. Exact identification is uncertain, but it appears most likely to be of Bronze Age or Early Iron Age date. The high degree of abrasion means that it is highly likely to be redeposited. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small amount of animal bone was recovered from two separate contexts within the evaluated area. A total of 79 fragments were present for analysis, weighing 553g (Appendix 4). The surface preservation of the remains was very good, with minimal fragmentation in most cases.

The minimum number of animals present within this assemblage was determined to be three: two pigs and one cow. The two pigs from context 1 (52), and were represented by all aspects of the developing skeleton, as most the epiphyses were unfused. Duplication of both the left and the right scapulae (shoulder blades) indicated the presence of a minimum of two young individuals. A cow was identified by the presence of loose teeth in context (54). No evidence of butchery cutmarks was present. No further information could be retrieved.

Charred plant remains by Joanna Pine

Two 20 Litre sub-samples were recovered from gully 2 (54) and ditch 1 (53). These were wet sieved and the flots recovered using a 0.25mm mesh. Both flots were rapidly scanned using a x10 hand lens and recorded a moderate quantity of seeds, most of which were cereals with a very little wood charcoal present.

Metalwork by Steve Crabb

A single piece of iron was recovered from ditch 1 (52). It is a ferrous object 40mm long and 9mm in diameter and weighs 20g. The surface is lightly corroded, but there is no evidence of mounting points or breaks. It could be a small weight which would have been suspended in a pouch rather than from a fitting.

Conclusion

The evaluation identified two linear features both containing pottery dated to the early medieval period (11th-12th centuries) as well as an undated, very shallow, possible pit. As the pottery sherds were fairly large and unabraded (and thus not residual), it seems likely that the linear features date from the early medieval period also. It is likely that the linears represent boundary features, perhaps, demarking the rear of properties that would have been present along the street frontage, assuming that latter was in existence at this time. Equally they could also represent subdivisions of plots or structures for animal husbandry. Unlike the adjacent evaluation (Weale 2007), no evidence of built structures was observed during the evaluation, most likely reflecting the location of the proposal site set back from the street. The presence of a dump of charred cereals, presumably representing the accidental burning of grain during processing, is likely to be indicative of the farming base of the medieval occupants of the site, if this was not already taken as a given.

Finally, the presence of a sherd of Bronze Age pottery is a very tentative indication of prehistoric occupation in the environs of the site but it clearly does not date ditch 2.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Length (m)</i> | <i>Breadth (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--|
| 1 | 14.80 | 1.60 | 1.20 | 0-0.32m turf/topsoil; 0.32-1.06m subsoil; 1.06-1.17m mid grey clayey silt; 1.17-1.20m+ clayey sandy silt natural geology. Gully 2; Pit 3 |
| 2 | 10.00 | 1.60 | 1.05 | 0-0.31m turf/topsoil; 0.31-1.05m subsoil; 1.05m+ limestone gravel and sandy clay natural geology. Ditch 1 [Pls 1 and 2] |

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

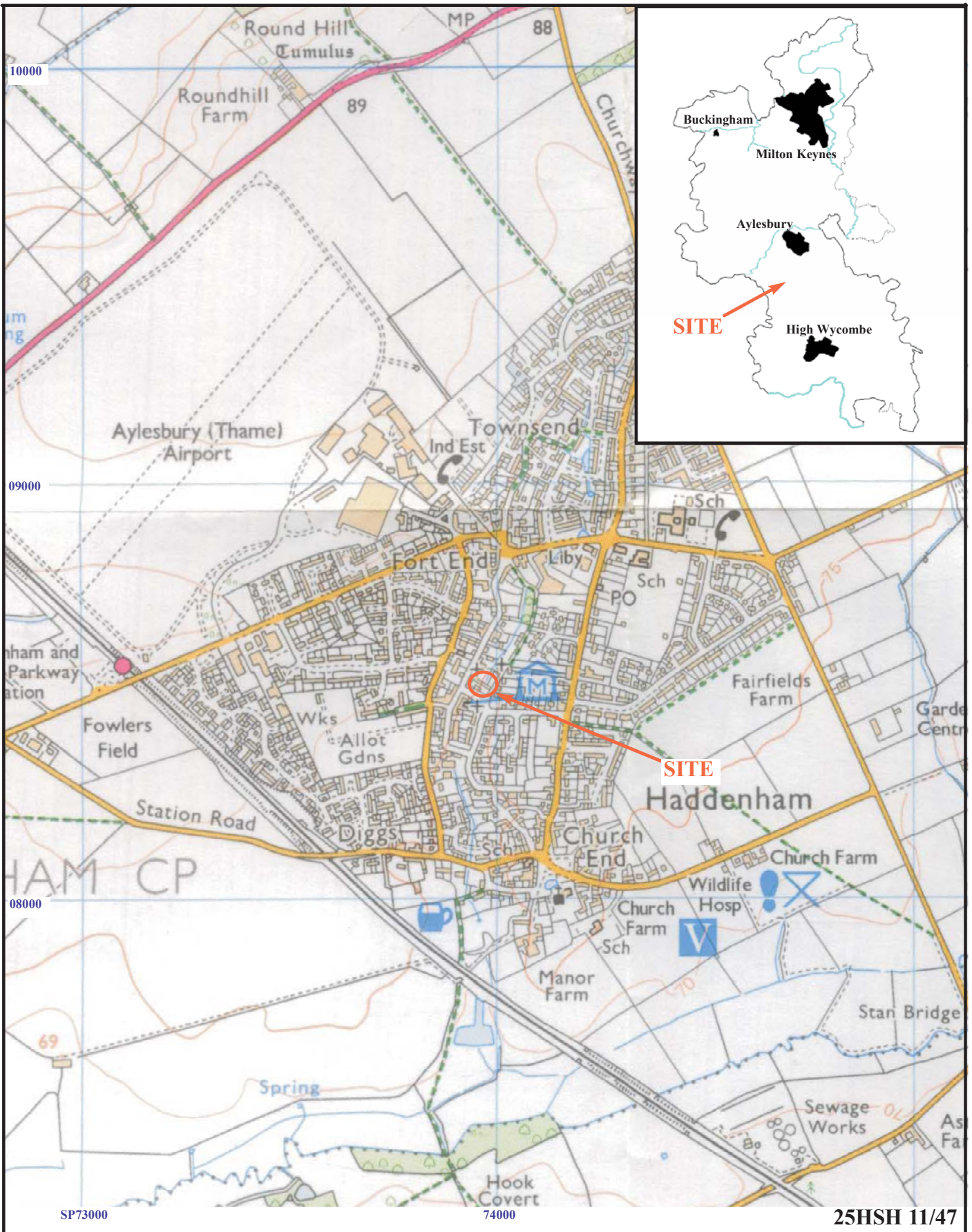
| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Cut</i> | <i>Fill (s)</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Dating evidence</i> |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 54 | Gully | Medieval (11th-12th century) | Pottery |
| 1 | 3 | 55 | Pit | Unknown | None |
| 2 | 1 | 52, 53 | Ditch | Medieval (11th-12th century) | Pottery |

APPENDIX 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

| <i>Cut</i> | <i>Fill</i> | <i>?Bronze Age</i> | | <i>OXAC</i> | | <i>OXBF</i> | | <i>OXY</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> |
| 1 | 52 | | | | | 1 | 11 | 1 | 20 |
| 2 | 54 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | | | 4 | 19 |
| | Total | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 11 | 5 | 39 |

APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of animal bone

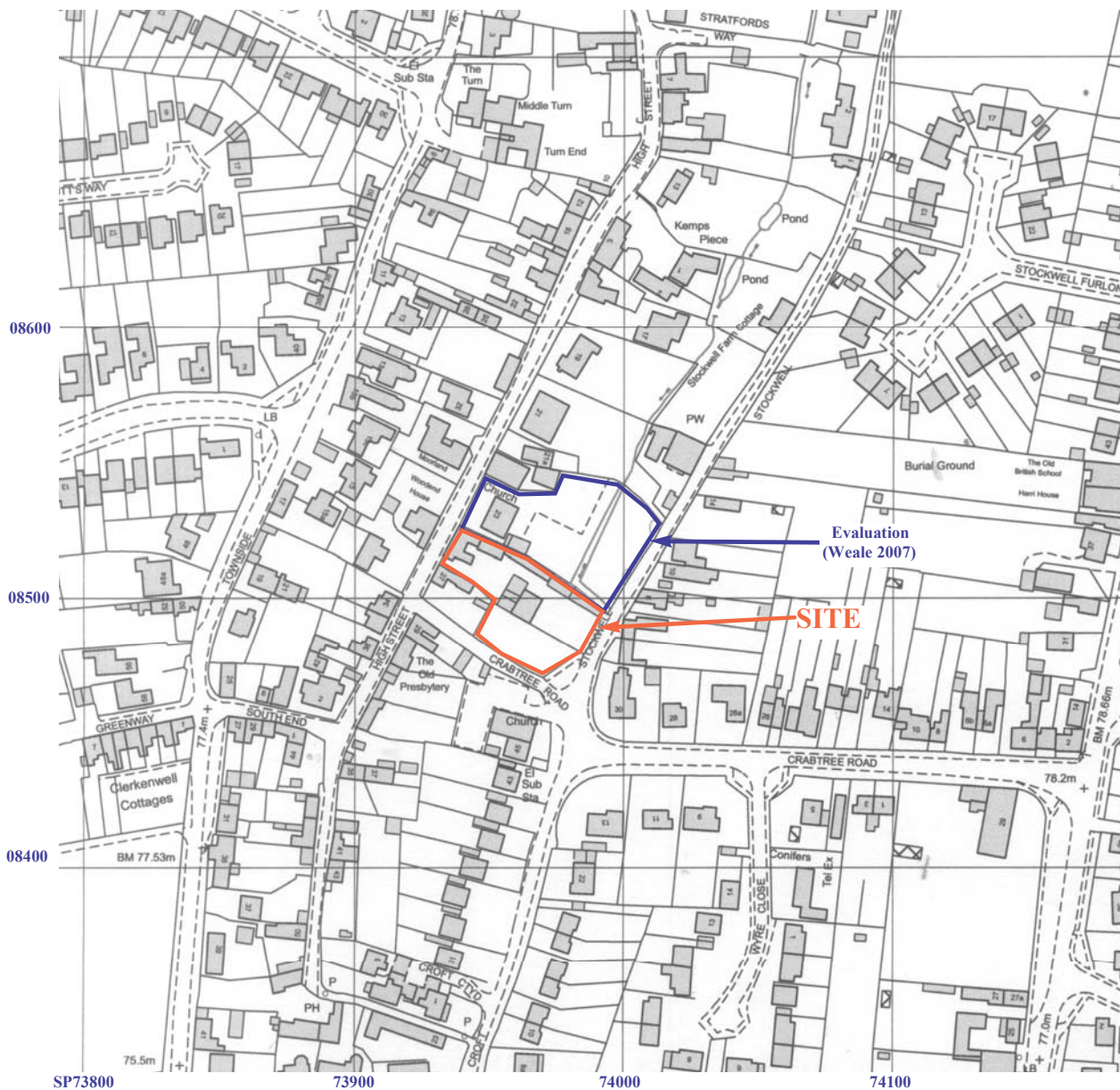
| <i>Cut</i> | <i>Deposit</i> | <i>No Frags</i> | <i>Wt (g)</i> | <i>Cow</i> | <i>Pig</i> | <i>Unidentified</i> |
|------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| 1 | 52 | 71 | 395 | | 71 (pig) | - |
| 2 | 54 | 8 | 158 | 6 teeth | - | 2 |
| Total MNI | | | | 1 | 2 | - |



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Figure 1. Location of site within Haddenham and Buckinghamshire.

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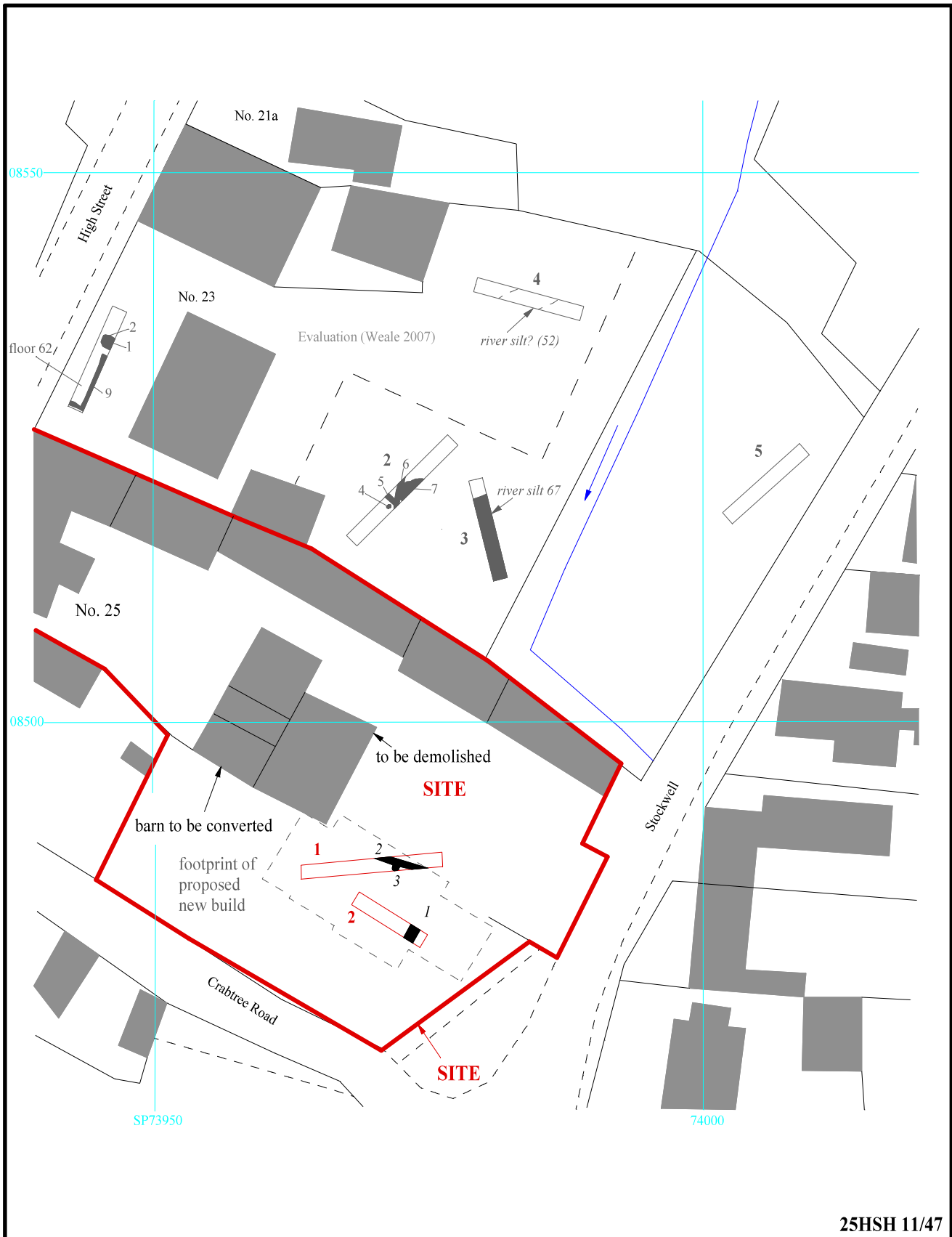


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off the High Street.

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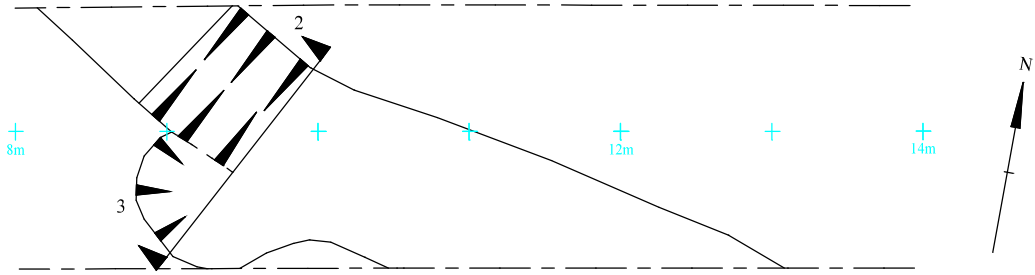
25SHS 11/47

**25 High Street, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, 2011
Archaeological Evaluation**

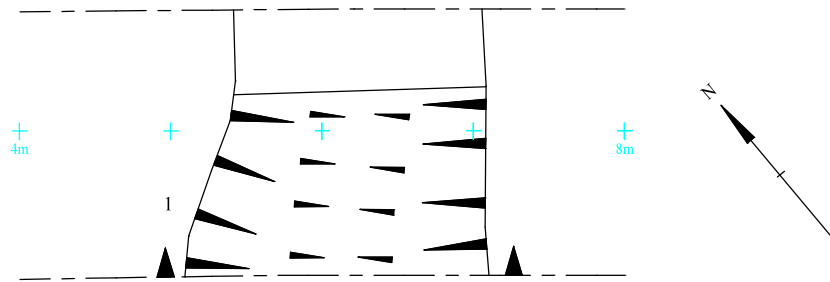
Figure 3. Trench Locations and previous adjacent evaluation



Trench 1



Trench 2



25HSH 11/47

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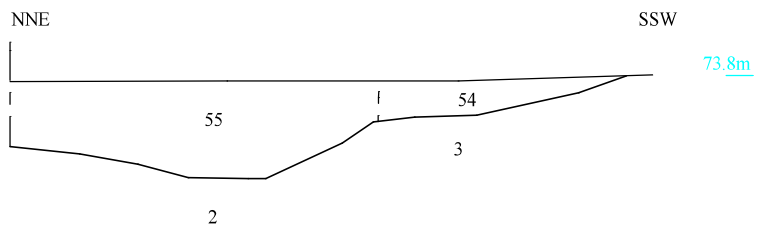
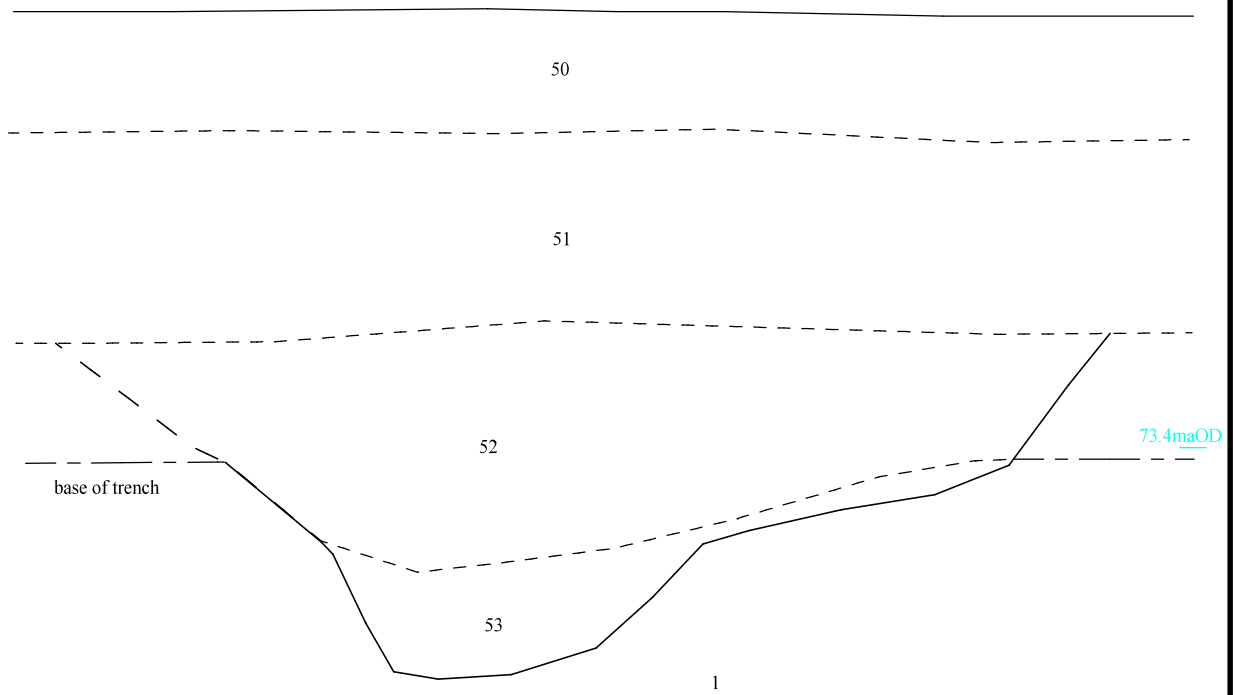
Figure 4. Detail of trenches.

0 5m

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SE

NW



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Figure 5. Sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking south east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, cut 1, looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.

25SHS 11/47

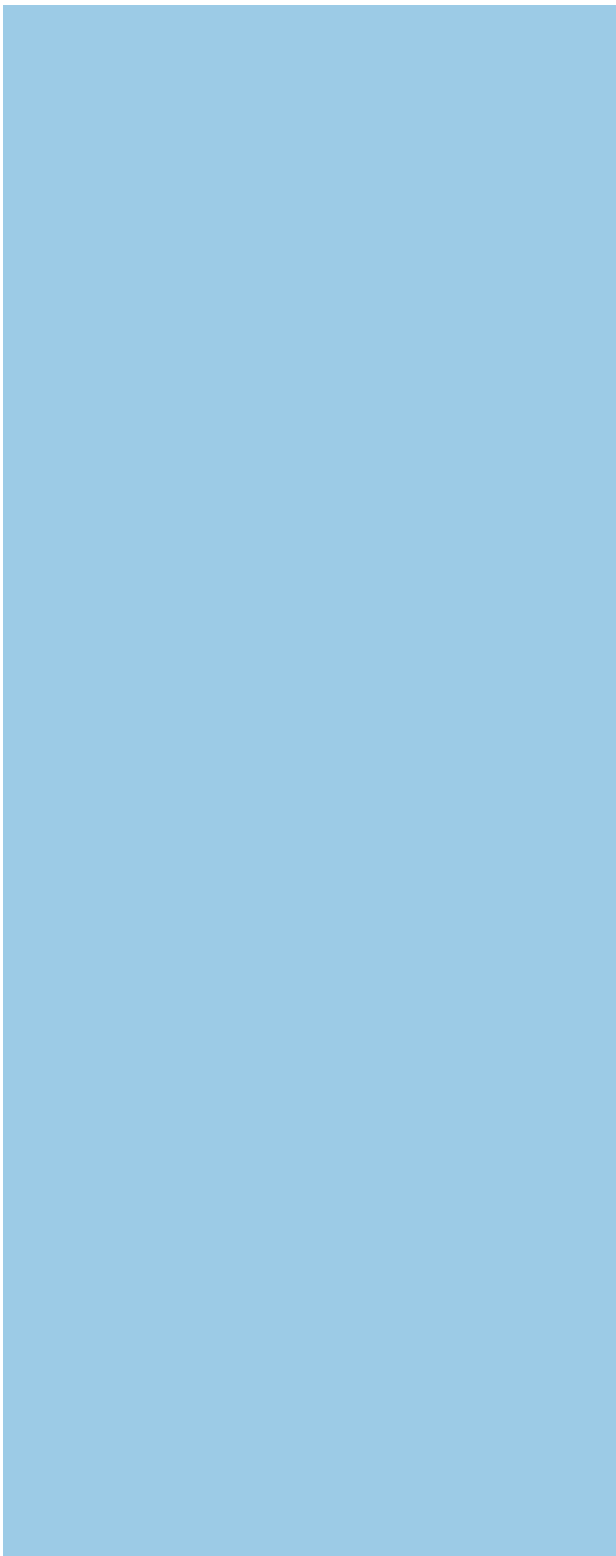
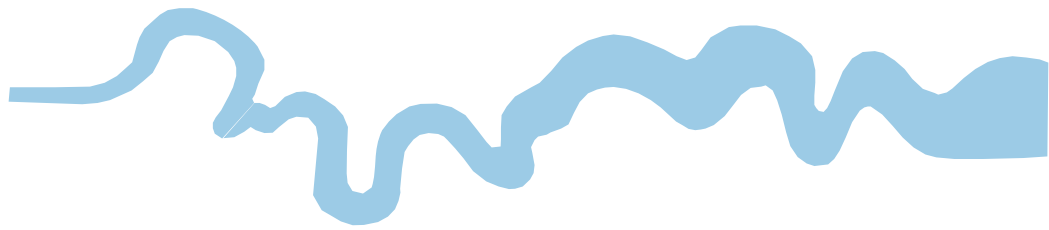
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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