

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Oaklands College, Hatfield Road,
St Albans, Hertfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Taylor

Site Code: OCH11

(TL 1820 0740)

**Oaklands College, Hatfield Road,
St Albans, Hertfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for CgMs Consulting**

by Andy Taylor
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices
Ltd

SiteCodeOCH11

June 2011

Summary

Site name: Oaklands College, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire

Grid reference: TL 1820 0740

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 31st May-2nd June 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: OCH 11

Area of site: c.2.2 hectares

Summary of results: The evaluation has revealed a small number of features of probable and possible archaeological interest, one of which is tentatively dated to the Bronze Age. A single prehistoric flint flake was recovered from the spoilheap.

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

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 06.06.11

Oaklands College, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 11/52

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Oaklands College, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire (TL 182 074) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Meager, of CgMs consulting on behalf of Oaklands College, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The College has been granted planning permission (5/2010/2486 FULL) to redevelop parts of the existing site with new facilities. 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 Mr Simon West, District Archaeologist with St Albans District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Steve Crabb between the 31st May and 2nd June 2011 and the site code is OCH 11. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at St Albans Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern margins of St Albans with Hatfield Road to the south and Oaklands Lane to the north and east. A disused sand and gravel quarry lies to the north west and to the south east, a woodland belt, stream and paddocks. The western boundary of the site comprises residential properties and school playing fields (Fig 2). The area being evaluated currently comprises open area grassland. The underlying geology consists of Boulder Clay (BGS 1978), which was observed in all trenches. The site lies at a height of *c.*75 m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

Several phases of archaeological works have been carried out on the site. In 1998 trenching and test pits revealed Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activity in the form of ditches and pits to the north and south of the site. A Roman enclosure and possible farmstead were identified to the north east and north west and a medieval boundary feature to the north east (BCAS 1998). A second evaluation (Milbank and Weale 2007) identified a

number of ditches, gullies, pits, postholes, all of which were undated. A third phase of evaluation (Albion Archaeology 2009), was undertaken, which produced largely negative results.

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 the extent of archaeological features already identified in the east of the site.

To determine if archaeological features of any period are present in the western portion of the site that has not previously been investigated.

Five trenches were to be dug measuring approximately 40m in length using a JCB type-machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. This would be done under constant archaeological supervision and all spoilheaps would be monitored for finds. A sufficient sample of archaeological features will be investigated.

Results

The trenches were dug in the locations intended (Fig. 3). They measured between 41.8m and 42.8m in length and between 0.30m and 0.40m deep. After digging and recording all fills from identified features was removed to maximise finds retrieval. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figure 4; Plate 1)

This trench measured 41.80m in length and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.22m of topsoil overlying 0.07m of subsoil overlying an orangey brown sandy clay natural geology. A gully was located at 18.50m. A 1m long slot (1) was dug across it and revealed it was 0.50m wide and 0.07m deep. Three small sherds of Bronze Age pottery (10g) were recovered from its light grey brown fill (52). A 5 Litre soil sample was taken and sieved from this gully which produced a further 10 fragments (15g) of fired clay/pottery along with 25 fragments of burnt flint (55g). A moderate volume of wood charcoal was also recovered.

Trench 2

This trench measured 42.60m in length and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.2m of topsoil overlying 0.15m of subsoil overlying sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were recorded.

Trench 3 (Figure 4; Plate 2)

This trench measured 42.20m in length and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.25m of topsoil overlying 0.1m of subsoil overlying sandy clay natural geology. A possible gully terminus was identified at 23m. Slot 2 was dug across this measuring 0.70m in length and revealed the gully to be 0.50m wide and 0.07m deep. No finds were recovered. Another gully and a pit (or possibly a second gully terminal) were located between 27m and 30m. A slot was dug across these to determine the relationship between the two. Pit 3 was found to cut gully 3. A 10 Litre soil sample was taken and sieved from pit 3 and a single fragment (1g) of fired clay and three fragments of burnt flint (75g) were recovered. A little wood charcoal was also recovered. No dating evidence was recovered from gully 4.

Trench 4

This trench measured 42.00m in length and 0.34m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.24m of topsoil overlying 0.06m of subsoil overlying sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were recorded but a flint flake was recovered from the topsoil.

Trench 5

This trench measured 42.80m in length and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m of topsoil overlying 0.05m of subsoil overlying sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological deposits were recorded.

Finds

Pottery and fired clay by Andy Taylor

Three small sherds of Bronze Age pottery weighing 10g were recovered from the fill of gully 1 in Trench 1. These were a light brown coloured fabric tempered with calcined flint temper of c.1.5mm diameter. They are undiagnostic bodysherds and show signs of abrasion. An additional ten fragments (15g) of fired clay were recovered by sieving, with a slightly vesicular fabric coloured black but without any distinctive indications that

they were pottery. The fragment (1g) of fired clay from pit 3 (54) in trench 3 was light brown in colour with no obvious inclusions.

Burnt Flint by Andy Taylor

Gully 1 produced 25 fragments (55g) of burnt flint all from sieving of a 10 Litre sample. Pit 3 produced 3 fragments (75g) of burnt flint from sieving of a 5 Litre sample.

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A single struck flint flake was recovered from the spoilheap of trench 4. It is not closely datable but is likely to be of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed a small number of archaeological features on the western section of the site comprising linear features and a pit, with only one feature in trench 1 tentatively dated to the Bronze Age period. The shallowness of the topsoil and the features, as well as the presence of plough scars suggest the site has been heavily truncated over the years. The absence of archaeology on the eastern side of the site, where it was expected to be present, may suggest that a second localised area of archaeological deposits to the west, has been identified by this phase of evaluation.

References

- AA, 2009, Oaklands College, Smallford Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, archaeological field evaluation, Albion Archaeology, Bedford
- BCAS 1998, Oaklands College, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire: Archaeological Field Evaluation, Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service, Bedford
- BGS, 1978, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 239, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich
- Milbank, D and Weale, A, 2007, Smallford Campus, Oaklands College, St Albans, Hertfordshire, an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 04/82a/2

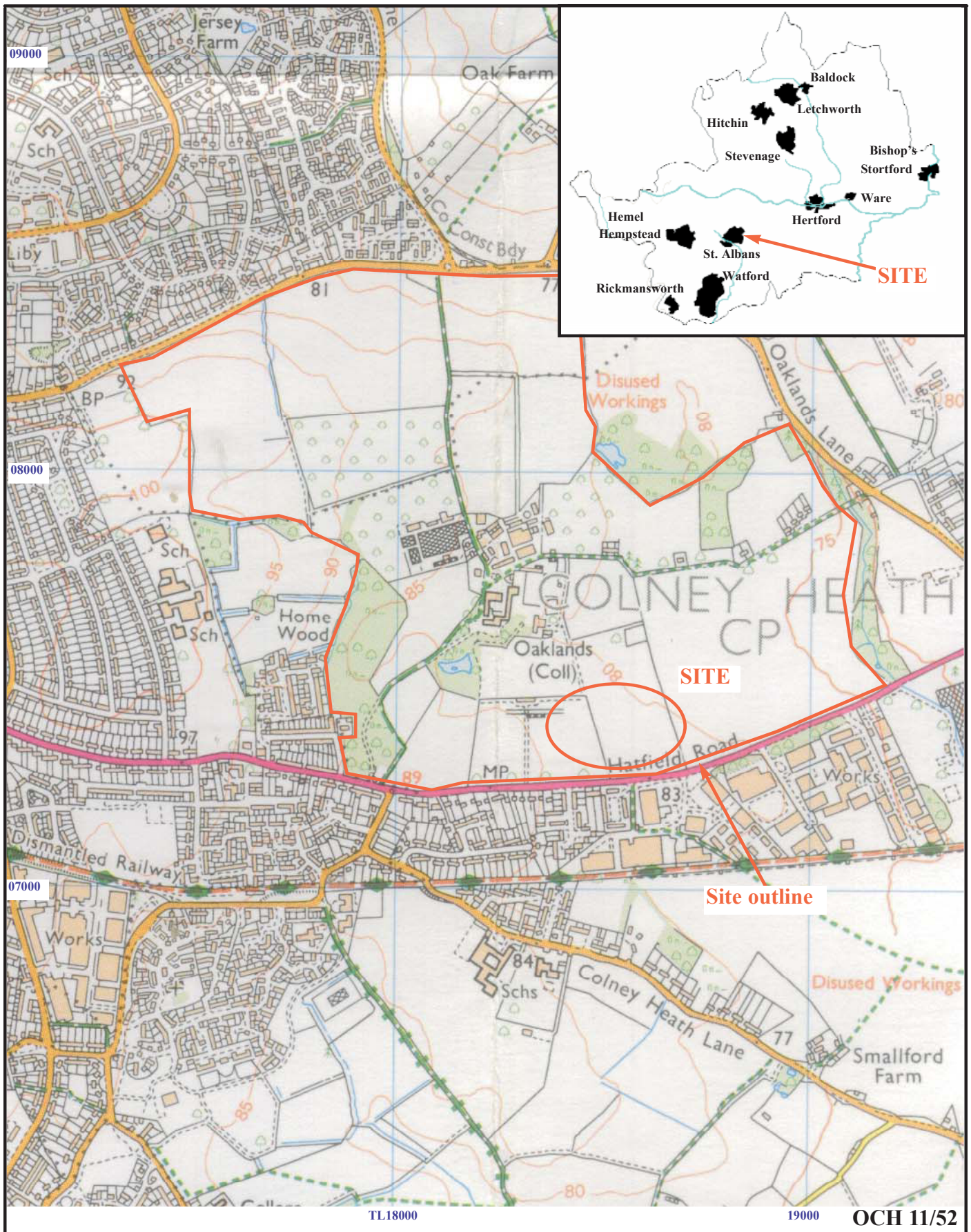
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	41.80	1.60	0.30	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22m-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m-0.30m+ orangey brown sandy clay natural geology. Gully 1. [Plate 1]
2	42.60	1.60	0.35	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ orangey brown sandy clay natural geology
3	42.20	1.60	0.40	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.35m subsoil; 0.35-0.40m+ orangey brown sandy clay natural geology. Gully terminal 2; Pit 3; Gully 4. [Plate 2]
4	42.00	1.60	0.34	0-0.24m topsoil; 0.24m-0.30m subsoil 0.30m-0.34m+ orangey brown sandy clay natural geology.
5	42.80	1.60	0.30	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.25m subsoil; 0.25m-0.30m+ orangey brown sandy clay natural geology.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
1	1	52	Gully	Bronze Age	Pottery
3	2	53	Gully Terminus	Unknown	None
3	3	54	Pit	Unknown	None
3	4	55	Gully	Unknown	None

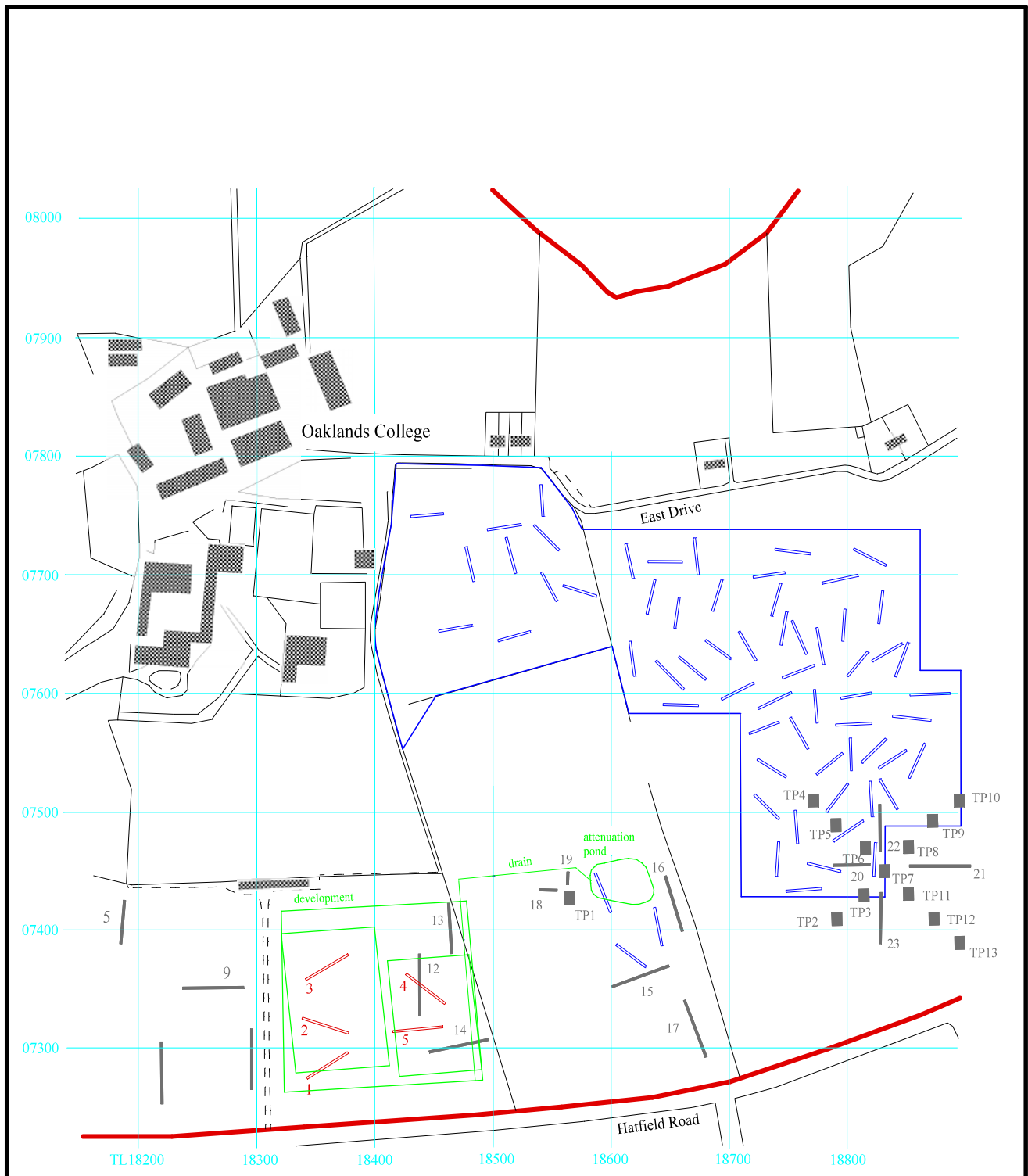


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Figure 1. Location of site within St. Albans and Hertfordshire.

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TVAS evaluation 2007 — (blue line)
 BCAS evaluation 1998 — (black line)

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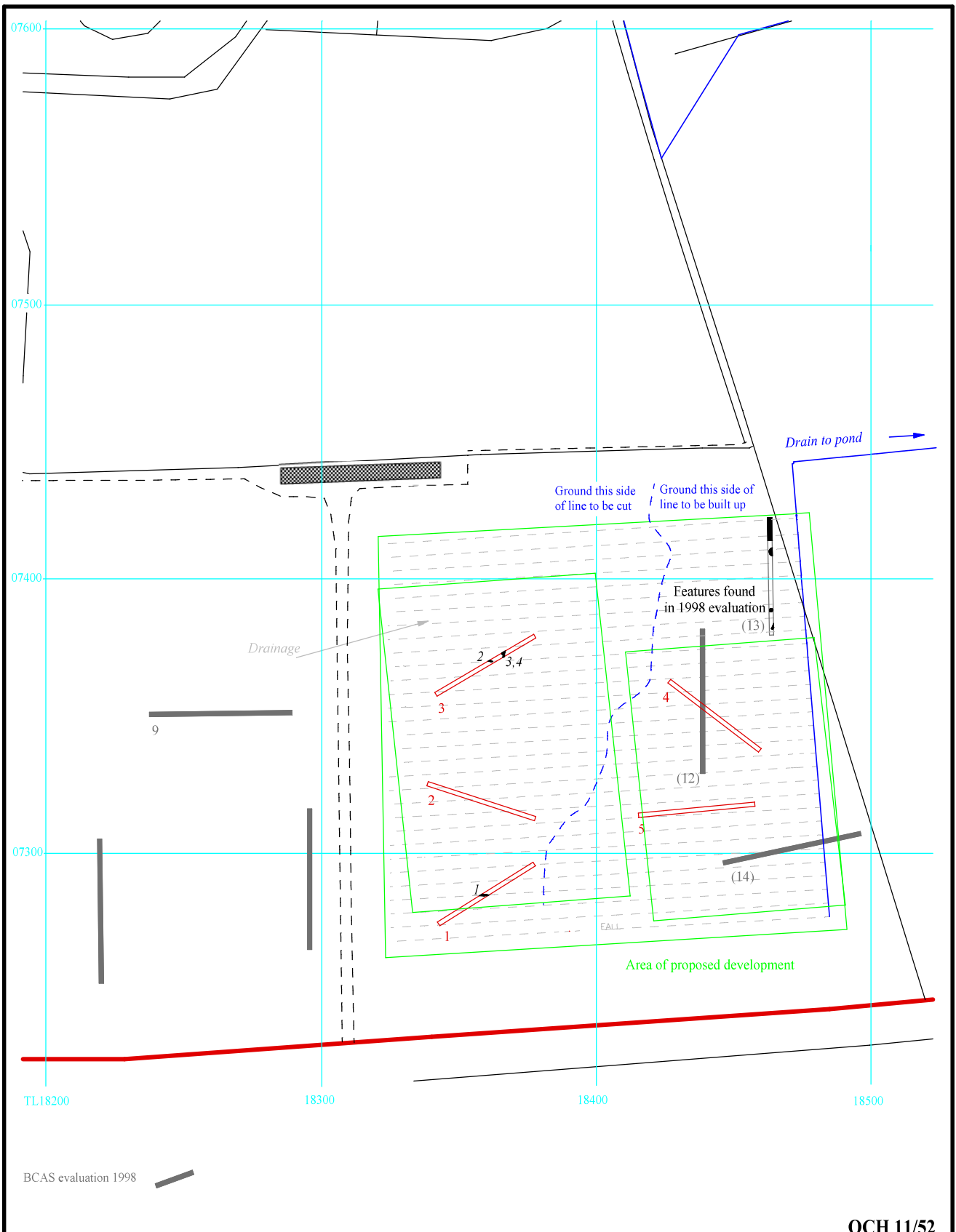
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Figure 2. Location of current trenching, and other archaeological investigations.

0 ————— 500m



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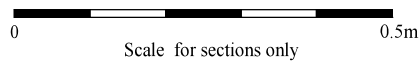
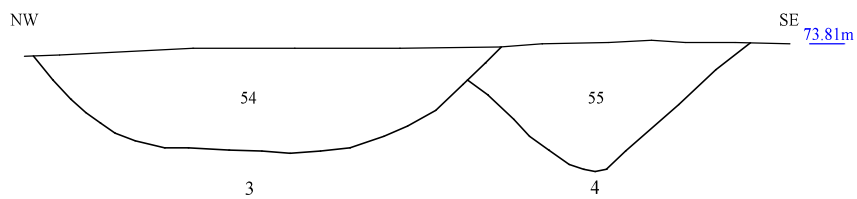
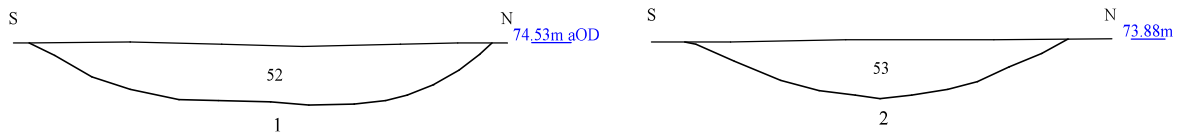
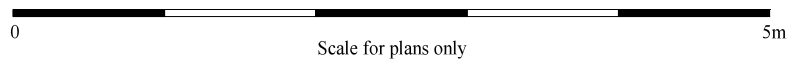
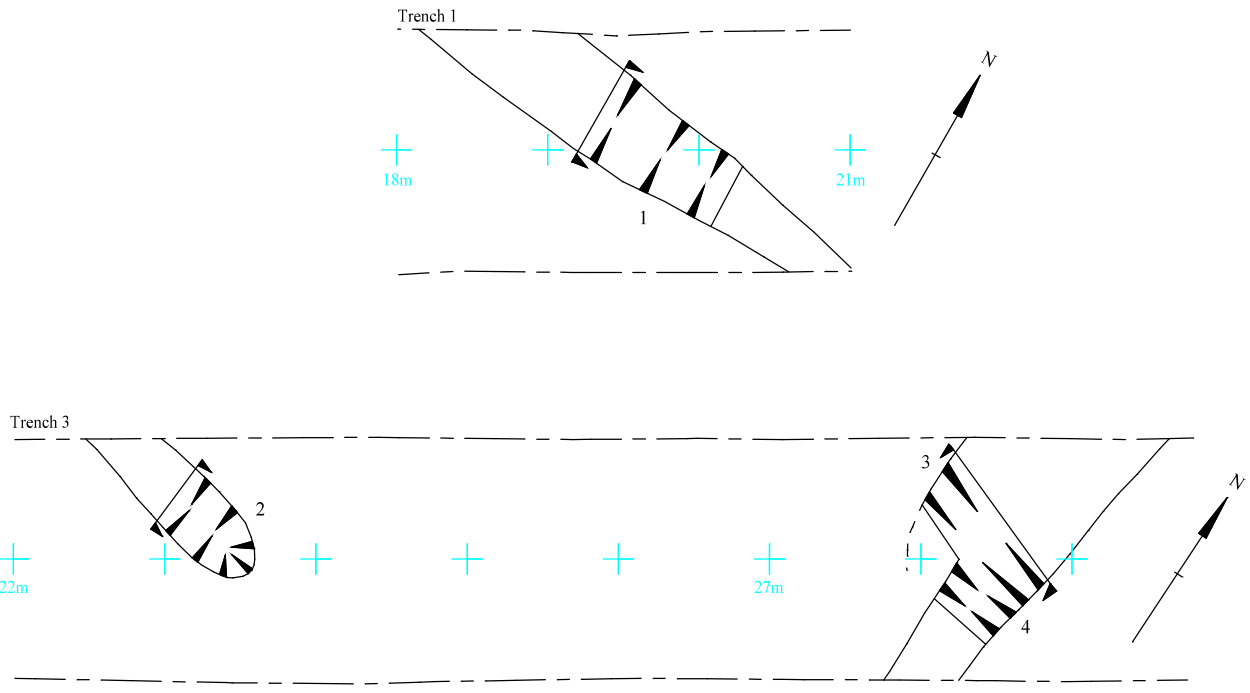
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Figure 3. Detailed location of trenches and previous archaeological investigation.



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Figure 4. Plans and sections.



Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north east. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.30m



Plate 2. Trench 3: Pit 3 and Gully 4, looking north, Scales: 0.5m and 0.30m.

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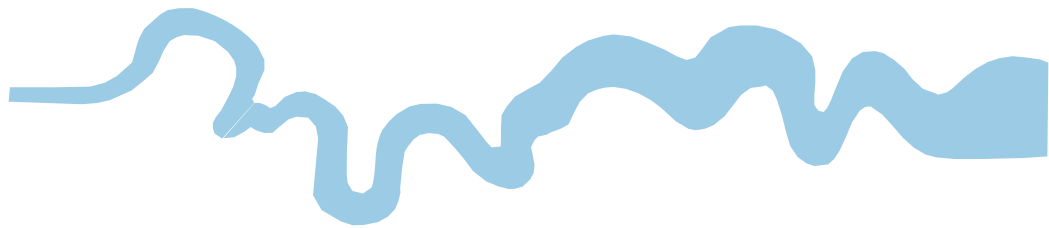
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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