

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Land off Malthouse Lane, Shutford,  
Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological watching brief**

**by Andrew Muddin**

**Site Code: MLS 10/136**

**(SP 3862 4039)**

# **Land off Malthouse Lane, Shutford, Oxfordshire**

## **An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Ms Harvey and Mr Watts**

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code MLS10/136

**June 2011**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land off Malthouse Lane, Shutford, Banbury, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SP 3862 4039

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 2nd June 2011

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Mundin

**Site code:** MLS 10/136

**Area of site:** c. 70 sq m

**Summary of results:** Terracing for a new house was observed. No archaeologically significant material relating to Medieval or earlier activity was uncovered on this site, though part of a probable 19th century retaining wall was recorded. A few sherds of 17th -19th century pottery were 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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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 13.06.11 Steve Preston✓ 10.06.11
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# Land off Malthouse Lane, Shutford, Banbury, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Report 10/136

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at land off Malthouse Lane, backing onto Ivy Lane, Shutford, Oxfordshire (SP 3862 4039) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Debbie Harvey and Mr Mark Watts, of 'Sinclair', Avon Dassett, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 2AL.

Planning consent (P10/01503/F) has been granted by Cherwell District Council, to construct a new house and parking on the eastward sloping parcel of land off Malthouse Lane, joining on the west side of Ivy Lane. This consent has been gained with a condition (9) requiring an archaeological watching brief during ground works. This took the form of observation during ground reduction to create a level base for the new building.

This requirement 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 written scheme of investigation approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, adviser to the District Council on matters pertaining to archaeology, based on a brief (Oram 2010) prepared by him, and was monitored by him. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin on 2nd June 2011. The site code is MLS 10/136.

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

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the centre of the village of Shutford, c.7km west of Banbury in north Oxfordshire. The site is a sloping parcel of land to the north of the Old School on Malthouse Lane, falling c.6 metres eastwards to Ivy Lane, forming its eastern extent. A small triangular plot of land is to its northern boundary which contains a stone-built double garage. A small path runs on its southern extent past the Old School, linking Malthouse Lane with Ivy Lane. The only standing structure on the site, a corrugated iron garage, is at the top of the slope on the Malthouse Lane frontage. The base of this building is at 140m above Ordnance Datum (OD), with Ivy Lane at a height of 134m aOD. The building is to be built towards the lower part of the slope, with access from Ivy Lane, with the top of the section at 137.44m aOD. The underlying geology is clay (Lias) over Marlstone (BGS 1982)

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological background for the site has been presented in a brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (Oram 2010). In summary it is suggested that the site is located within the medieval core of the village. The parish church of St Martin, at the south end of the village, 200m to the south of the site, is thought to have origins from the 12th century. The late 16th-century Manor House is also close to this, on the south side of the Banbury Road.

A number of listed buildings exist close to the site. Whitelands, (also known as The Old Malthouse), is Grade II listed and dated to the 17th century. The Old School has a date plaque above its front gable dated 1866.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1882 shows some of these buildings (Fig. 3), identifying the School and the former Methodist Chapel. This map shows no buildings on the proposal site, but does show the land parcel subdivided. A photograph of unknown date (Pl. 1) shows a stone wall existed at the rear of the site, at the base of the site slope. This was thought to be a pig pen (M. Watts, pers com.), but could also be the dividing wall shown on the 1882 map.

More generally, Shutford lies *c.*1km to the north of Madmarston Iron Age hill fort and a small Roman settlement at Swalcliffe Lea (Briggs *et al.* 1986; Tiller and Darke 2010). The village itself was also part of the textile industry of the Banbury area, here making plush, that brought prosperity to the village during the 18th and 19th centuries but which had vanished from the area by the middle of the 20th century (Tiller and Darke 2010).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved the examination of areas of intrusive ground working, in this case, ground reduction into the bank for the location of the new footing trenches. The excavation was carried out with a 360° mechanical excavator, fitted with a bladed grading bucket.

## **Results**

The area that was levelled was located on the eastern side of the site covering an area of 12m by 6m, (Fig. 4). It did not affect the garage at the top (north west) side of the site.

### *Upper terracing*

Two terraces were created while digging into the slope to allow for spoil to be removed off site and for the machine to dig from a level base. The stratigraphy uncovered comprised a layer of topsoil (50) 0.46m thick covering the slope at a standard thickness, overlying subsoil (51). This was 0.31m at the highest point of the section and was a reddish brown silty clay. This in turn overlies a natural geology of reddish yellow-brown silty clay. The deepest section extended to a depth of 1.2m (western side). No archaeological deposits were uncovered though pieces of pottery came from the topsoil.

### *Lower terracing*

Two areas of investigation in the south-east and north-east corners of the site comprised the lower terrace (Fig. 4). The south-eastern corner excavation, created a step in the western section of the slope which was 1.25m deep. This identified similar undisturbed stratigraphy as elsewhere, noting natural geology to be present beneath 0.77m of overburden.

In the southern corner a portion of retaining wall (52) was uncovered. The portion of this wall observed was 4.25m long and 0.66m wide. It was made of the local Hornton stone and was unmortared. At the north end it was unclear but may have been turning westwards, upslope. The stone was firmly bonded into the natural geology on its western edge, but butting and overlaid by a backfilling deposit (53) against its east face. This deposit (53) was a brown-red silty clay, which contained 17th century pottery, clay pipe, glass and animal bone. The top of this deposit was noted to be 0.7m below the existing ground level.

In the north-eastern corner of the site, the stratigraphy was more disturbed. This area was only excavated to a depth of 0.5m as natural geology was reached at this depth, showing tree-root disturbance (a cherry tree had recently been cut down at this location). No archaeological features were noted here.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 21 sherds with a total weight of 248g. It was entirely post-medieval in date, and all deposited in 19<sup>th</sup> century contexts. The material was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXDR:	Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 5 sherds, 61g.
OXBESWL:	Staffordshire slip-trailed earthenware, 1650 – 1750. 1 sherd, 26g.
OXFM:	Staffordshire White-glazed English Stoneware, 1730 – 1800. 1 sherd, 5g.
OXEST:	London stoneware. c. 1680 plus. 1 sherd, 12g.
WHEW:	Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th - 20th C. 13 sherds, 144g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 1. All the fabric types are well-known in the region, with the range of wares present from the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Animal bone* by Ceri Falys

A total of five fragments of bone were recovered weighing 31g (Appendix 2). The overall preservation of the remains was generally poor, with the majority of fragments being non-descript mid-shaft fragments of long bones. The only identifiable fragment was the medial portion of a large-sized animal (most likely a horse) rib in topsoil (50). No further information could be retrieved.

### *Other finds* by Andrew Muddin

Two thin stems (>6mm wide) of clay tobacco pipe, each weighing 1g, were uncovered from the deposit 53. These are probably of 19th century origin but are not closely datable. A small piece of clear window glass, also 1g, was uncovered from deposit 53.

## **Conclusion**

The terracing created for the a new house development did not reveal any finds or deposits of archaeological interest dating prior to the 17th century. A section of wall probably of 19th century date but with 17th century pottery recovered from it's construction cut may be the same feature as depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1882.

## **References**

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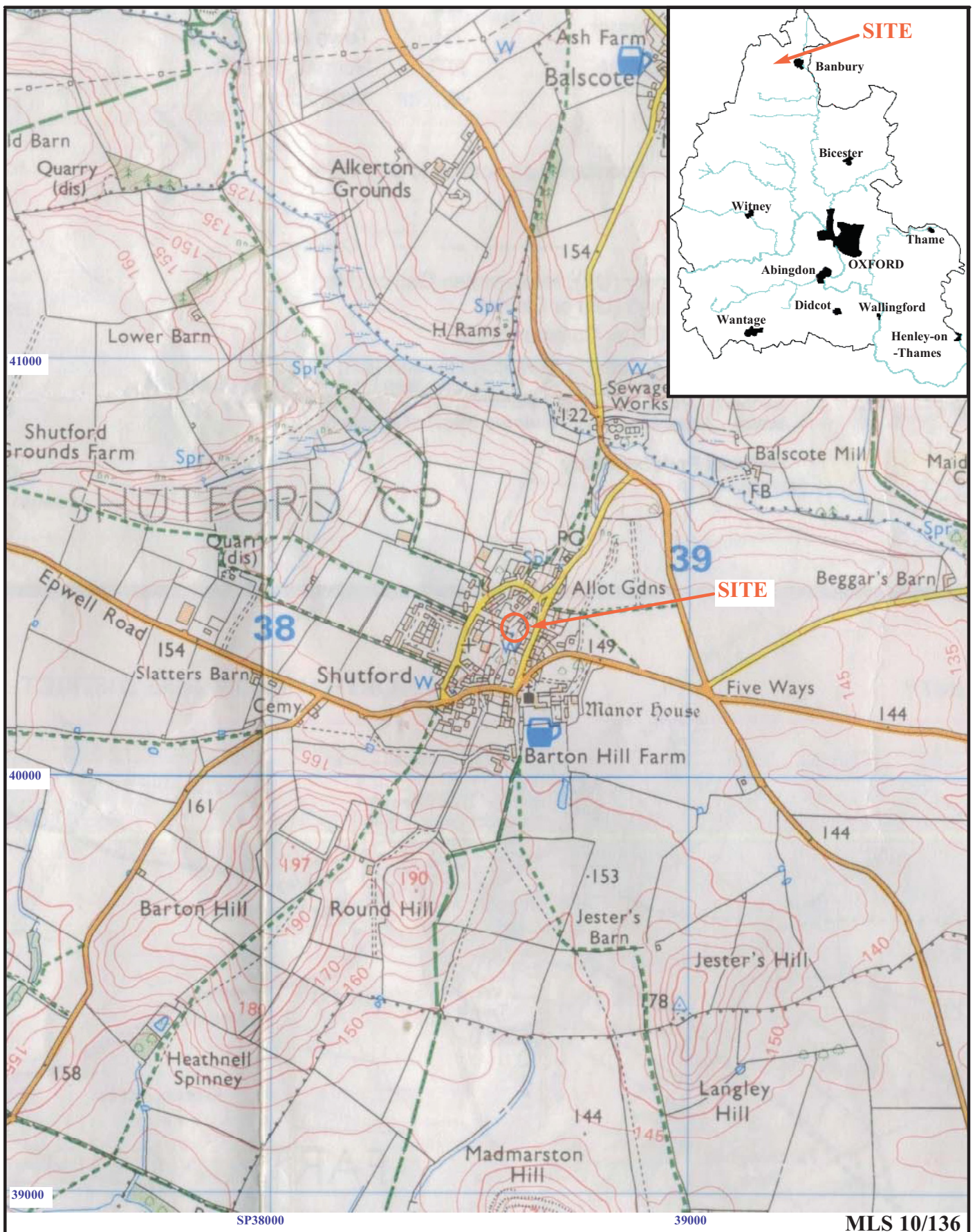
**APPENDIX 1:** Pottery catalogue by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	OXDR		OXBESW		OXFM		OXEST		WHEW	
Deposit	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
50	5	61							2	62
53			1	26	1	5	1	12	11	82
Total	5	61	1	26	1	5	1	12	13	144



**APPENDIX 2:** Animal bone catalogue

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No. Frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Large (Horse?)</i>	<i>Unidentified</i>
-	50	3	21	1	2
-	53	2	10	-	2
Total		5	30	1	4



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Figure 1. Location of site within Shutford and Oxfordshire.

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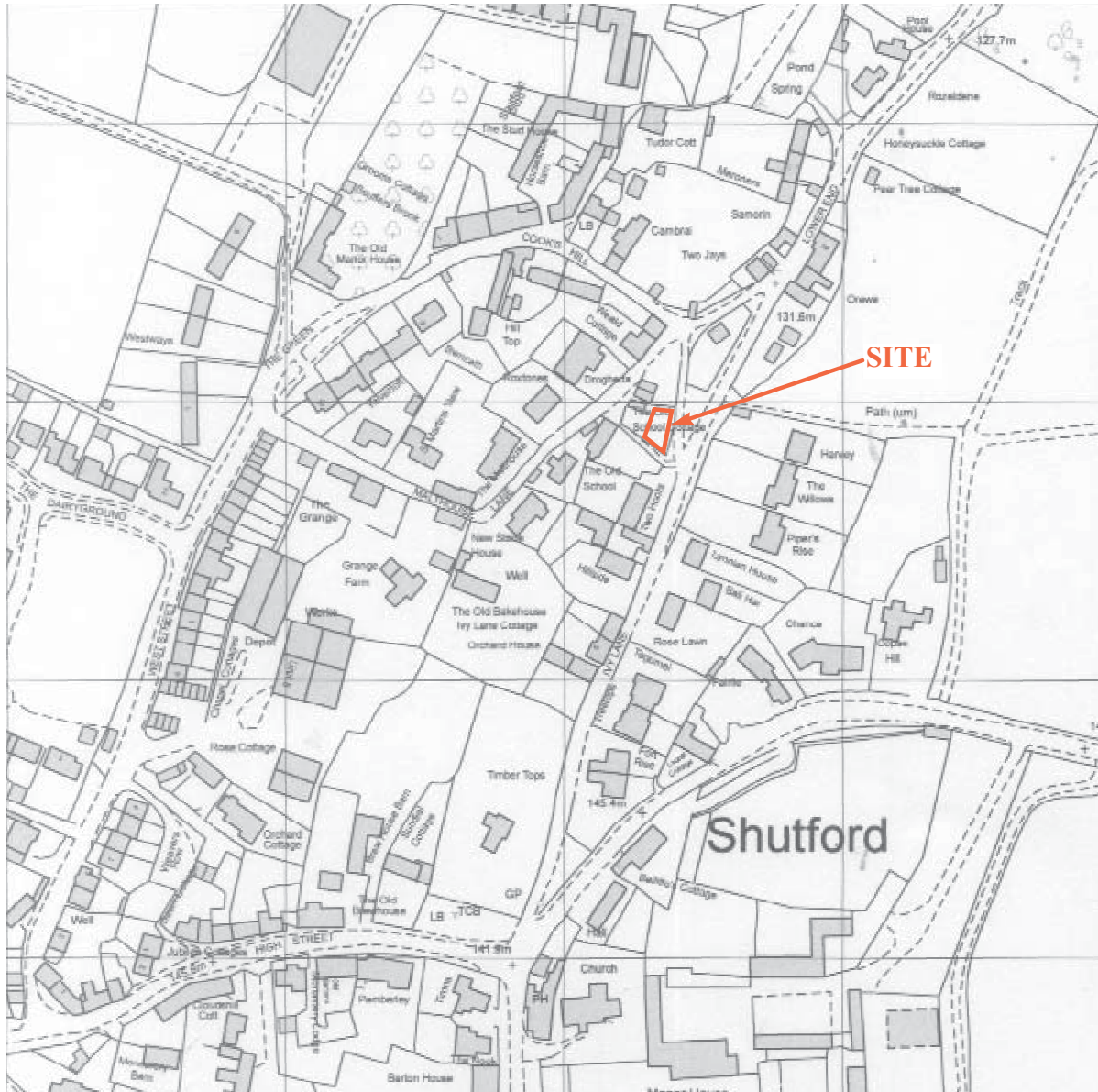


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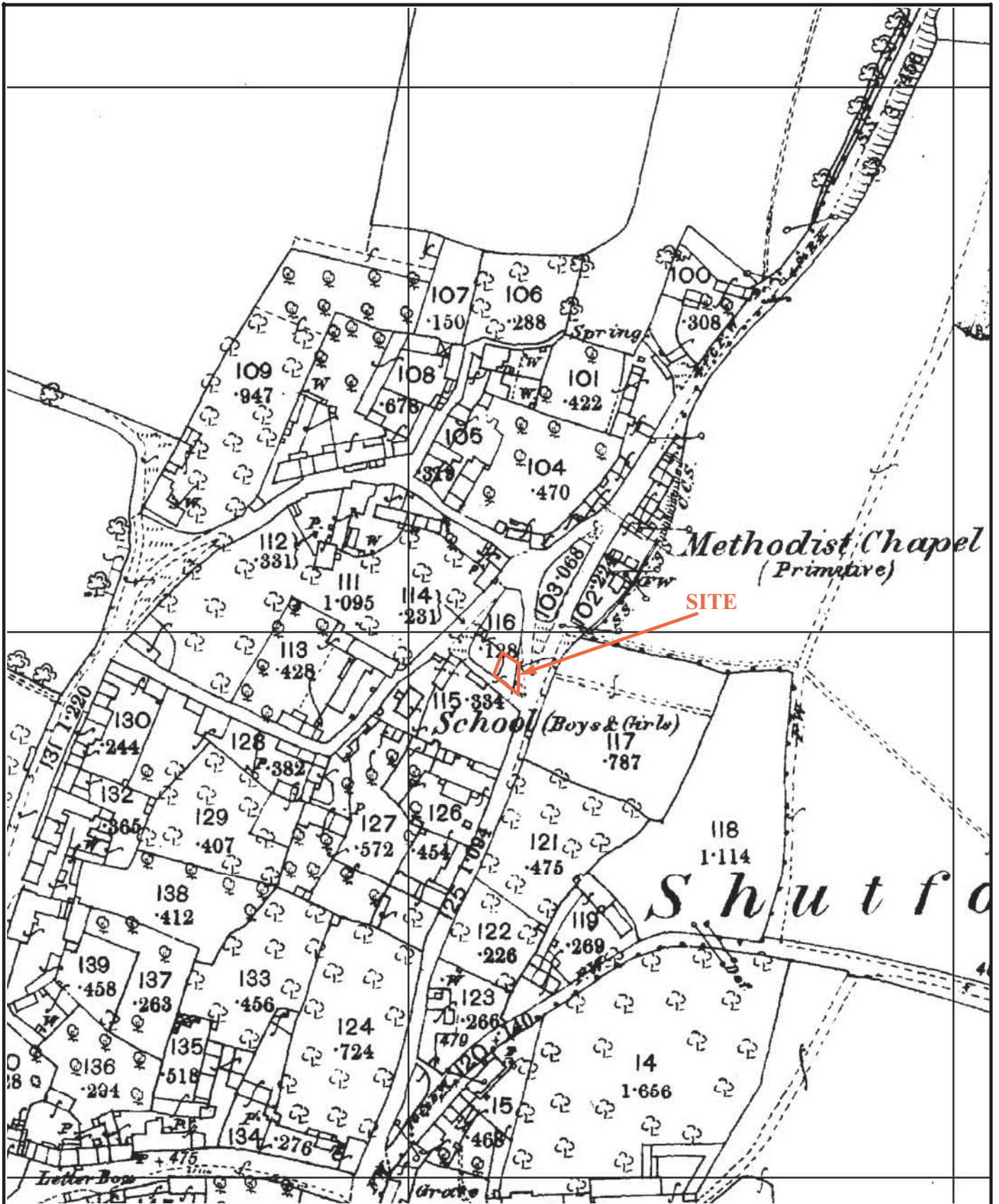
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site in relation to Malthouse Lane, off Ivy Lane.

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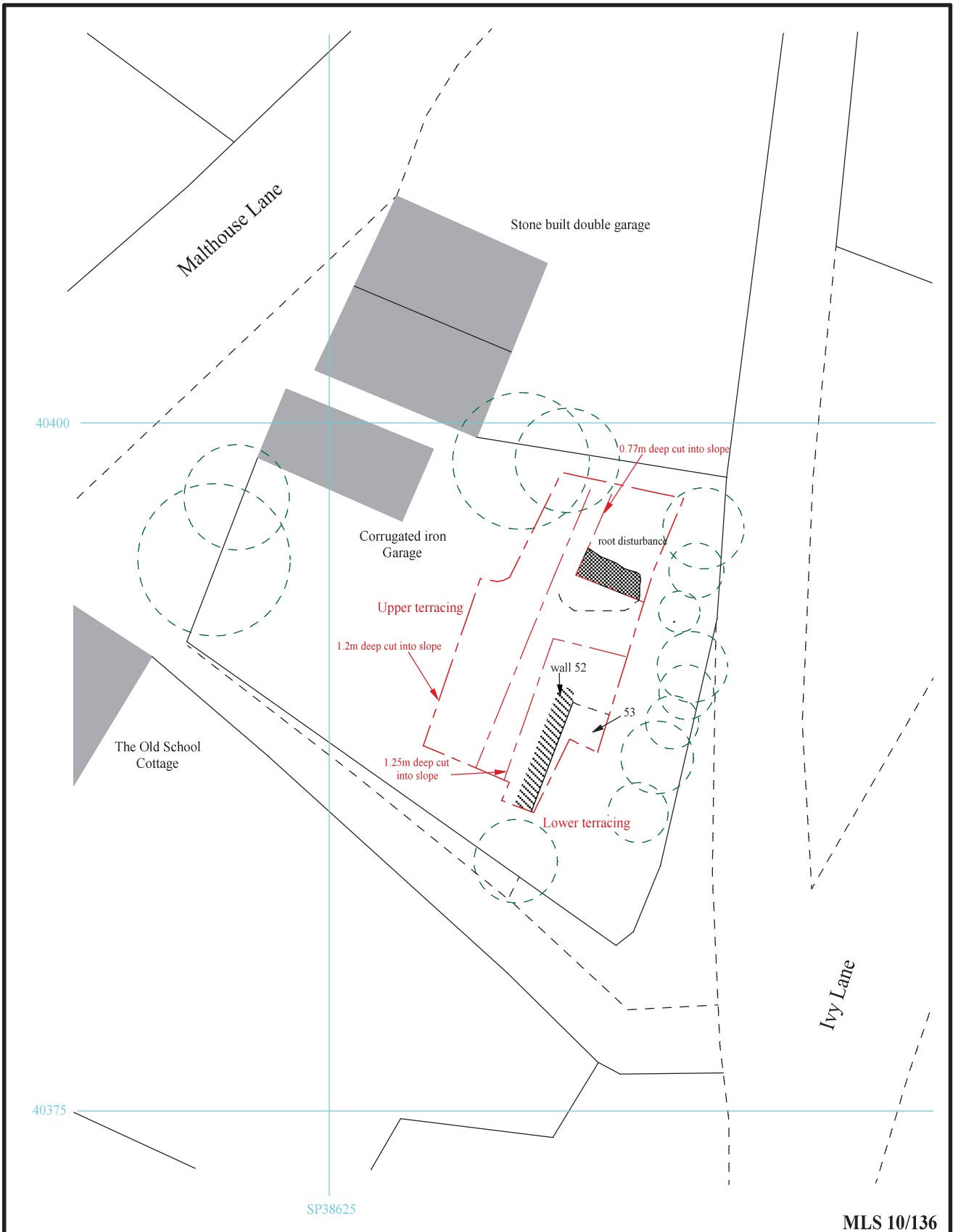


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Figure 3. 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 1882.

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Figure 4. Location of areas of ground reduction observed.







Plate 1. Photograph probably early 20th century, showing site in bottom right, on Ivy Lane frontage, looking north-west. Note stonework on boundary corner.



Plate 2. Retaining wall (52), looking south, Scale: 1m.

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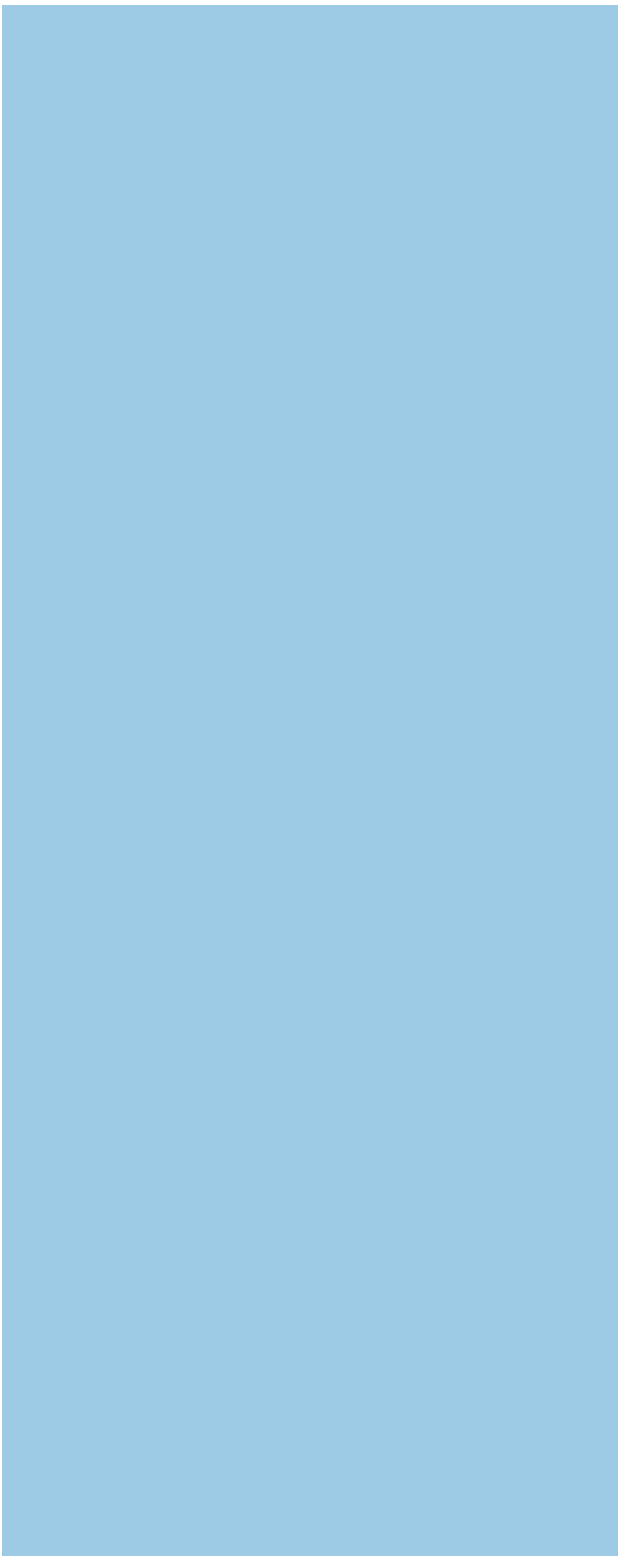
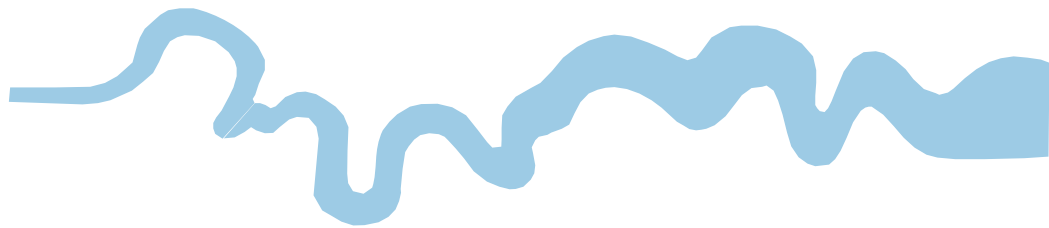
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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