

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land off Milton Road, Bloxham,
Banbury, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by James Lewis

Site Code: MRB10/81

(SP 4312 3520)

**Land off Milton Road, Bloxham,
Banbury, Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Bewley Homes Plc

by James Lewis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code MRBB10/81

November 2011

Summary

Site name: Land off Milton Road, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 4312 3520

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 1st August to 9th November 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James Lewis

Site code: MRBB 10/81

Area of site: c. 0.44ha mitigation area within overall site of 1.8ha

Summary of results: Only a single undated ditch was identified.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Jo Pine✓ 15.11.11 Steve Preston✓ 15.11.11
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Land off Milton Road, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by James Lewis

Report 10/81

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at land off Milton Road, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Ian Mathewson, of Bewley Homes Plc, Inhurst House, Brampton Road, Baughurst, Hampshire, RG26 5JJ.

Planning consent (09/01811/F) has been granted by Cherwell District Council for the construction of 61 new houses on a parcel of land off Milton Road, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire (SP 4312 3520). The archaeological potential of the area has been highlighted in a brief by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2010) which drew on a previous desk based survey and field evaluation, which recorded two undated (but probably medieval or earlier) linear features. The consent is therefore subject to a condition (23) relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during the groundworks.

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 Cherwell District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist with the County Archaeological Services, and based on a brief prepared by him (Oram 2010). The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson, James Lewis, Andrew Muddin and Jackie Pitt from 1st August to 9th November 2011 and the site code is MRBB 10/81.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south-east edge of the village of Bloxham which extends down a low lying ridge of a small stream which feeds into the Sor Brook (Fig. 1). The site is located on what was originally open fields with the Milton Road and residential housing to the north and the Barford Road and residential housing to the west (Fig. 2). To the east and south are open fields which lead onto a disused airfield. The natural geology consists of clay (BGS 1968) and this site lies at an elevation of 125 m above Ordnance Datum in the west, sloping down to 120m aOD in the east.

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area of modest archaeological potential as it lies beyond the historic core of the village. There has been relatively little archaeological investigation in Bloxham. To the south-west a Roman cemetery of unknown extent has been recorded and various enclosures of presumed prehistoric date have been identified as cropmarks. Recent excavation on the northern margins of the village has revealed Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation (Ford 2010). Evaluation of the site as part of the planning application located two linear features, sealed beneath surviving earthworks of medieval (or early post-medieval) ridge and furrow field system, and although one sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered from one ditch, and a copper alloy button from another, this was not considered reliable dating evidence (OA 2005).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This was to involve the examination of areas of intrusive groundworks in particular the digging of foundation trenches and any areas of overburden stripping. The watching brief was only to take place for housing plots 27–30, 37 and 46–53, where the evaluation had recorded features, unless a wealth of archaeology was found which extends widely across the development site, in which case the scheme would be revised to take this into account.

Archaeological deposits exposed were to be recorded but not further excavated unless threatened by the ground works. All threatened archaeological features were to be hand cleaned, photographed and drawn as a minimum. Sufficient time was allowed to carry this out within the ground works schedules.

Results

The mitigation area was stripped of topsoil (c. 0.25m deep). Other than the previous evaluation trenches, no features were visible at this level.

Groundworks for the footing trenches were monitored. In the south-west corner of the plot, where a barn previously stood, building materials and disturbance relating to the footings of the barn (2) were evident, along with some tree root disturbance.

A single ditch was recorded in two locations (1 and 3) during the groundworks for house plots 31 and 32 (Figs 3 and 4). The ditch was aligned NE to SW and measured at least 6.5m long, 1.0m wide and between 0.36–0.45m deep. It was not observed in footings further north which its line would have intercepted, so it either

terminated or turned before this point. To the south, the garage footing where it might have been visible was disturbed by tree roots. It contained a single fill of (51 and 53) of firm mid grey brown clay with occasional pebble inclusions. No finds were recovered from this feature. Although it was on approximately the same orientation as the feature (853) recorded in the evaluation trench 8b, but further west, this ditch bore no resemblance to ditch 853.

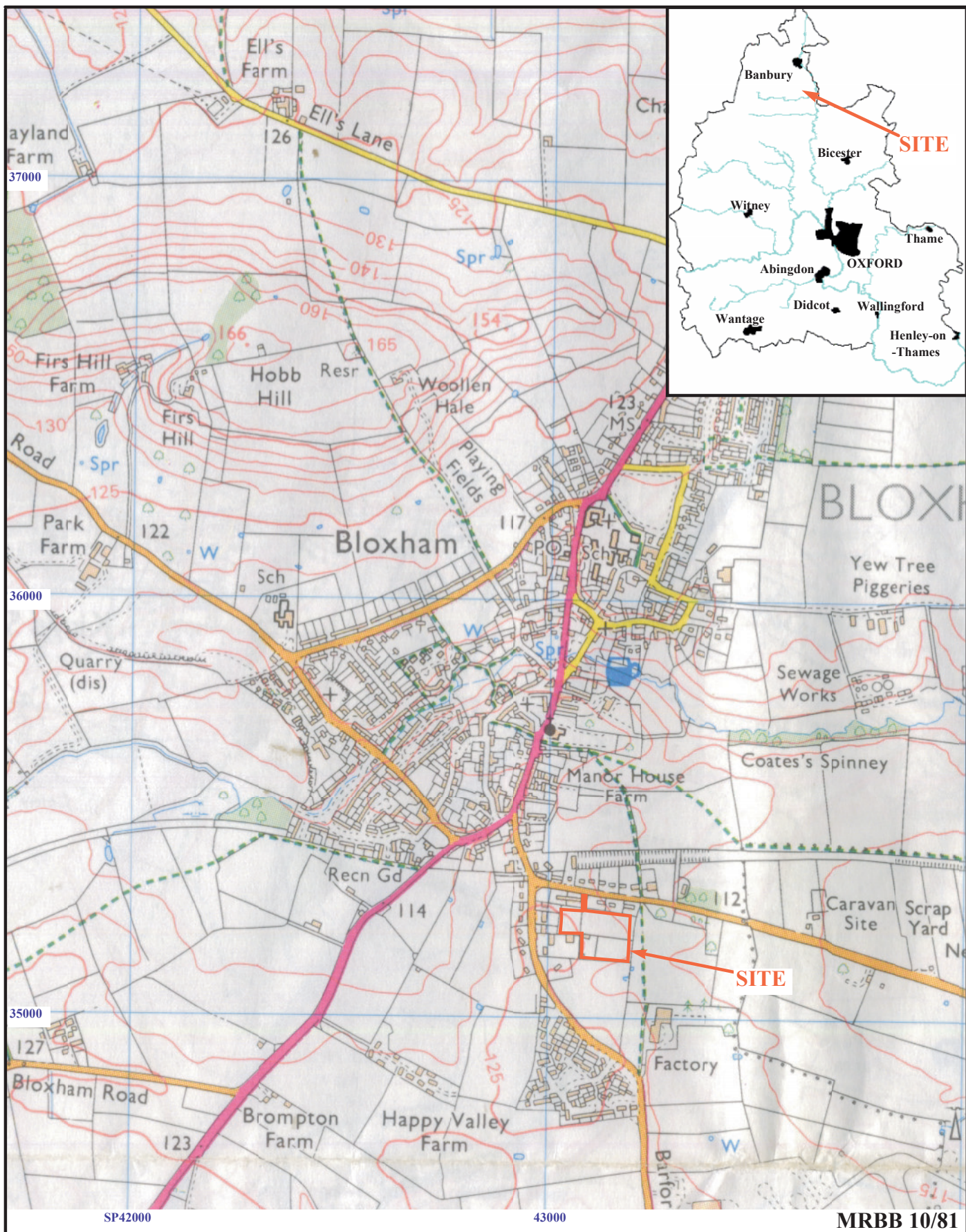
There was no sign of any other feature in the footing trenches observed.

Conclusion

Only a single ditch was identified during this investigation however no dating evidence was found within it.

References

- BGS, 1968, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63 360, Sheet 218, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich
- Ford, S, 2010, 'Middle Iron Age occupation at Ells Lane, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, **74**
- OA, 2005, 'Land south of Milton Road, Bloxham, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation Report', Oxford Archaeology, Oxford
- Oram, R, 2010, 'OS Parcel 1319, South of Paddington Cottage, Milton Road, Bloxham, Design Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, Oxford



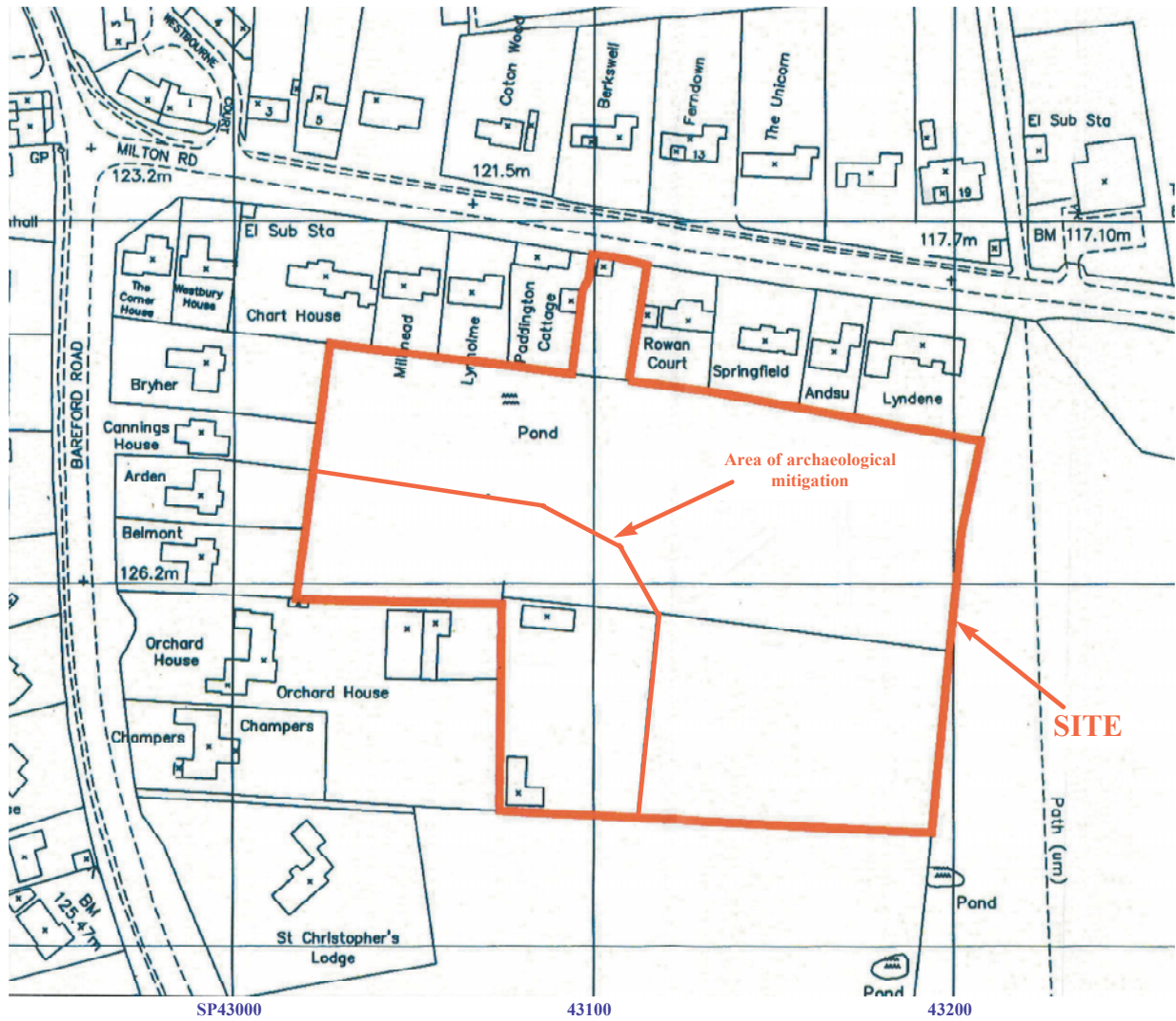
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Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Bloxham and Oxfordshire.

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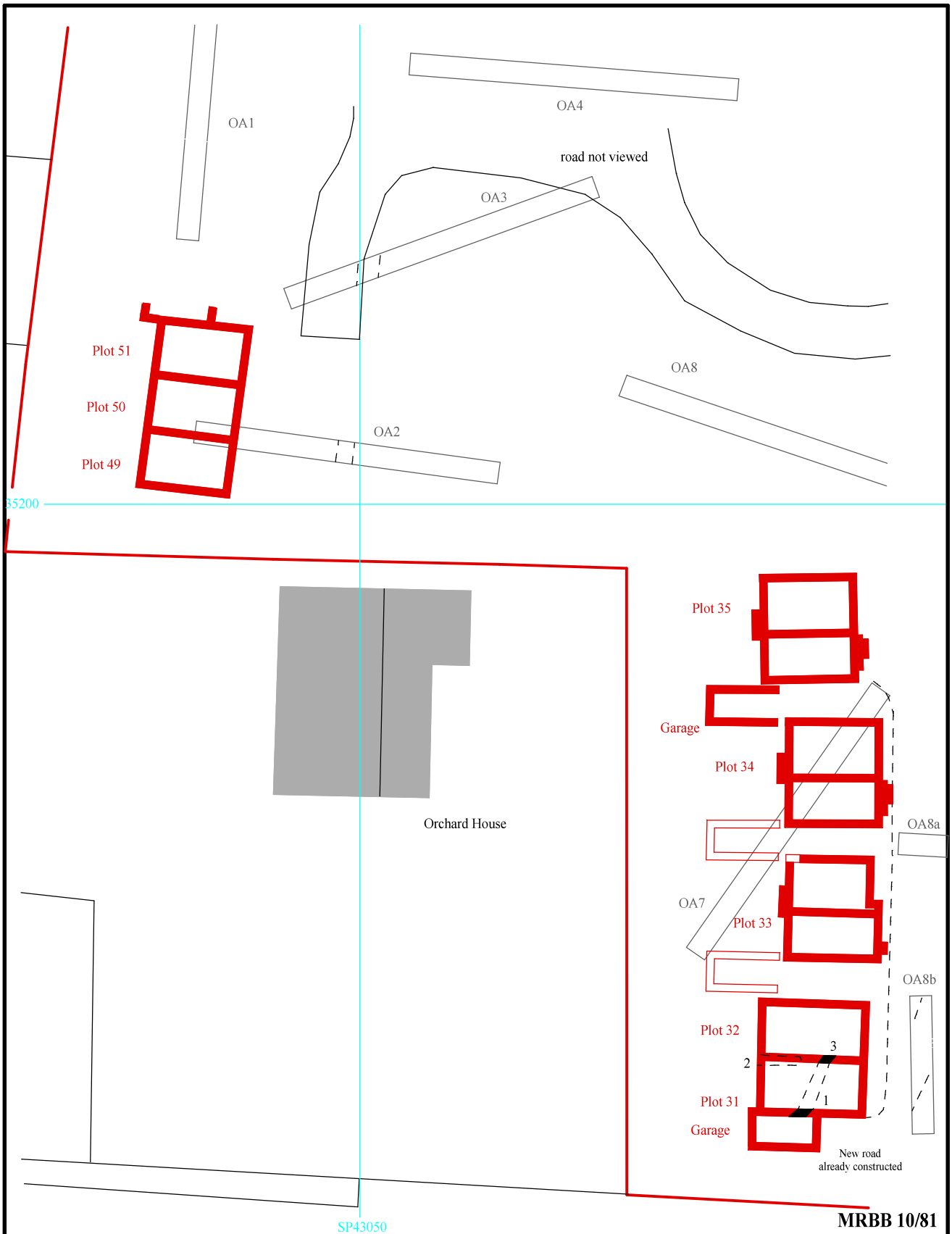
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Milton Road.

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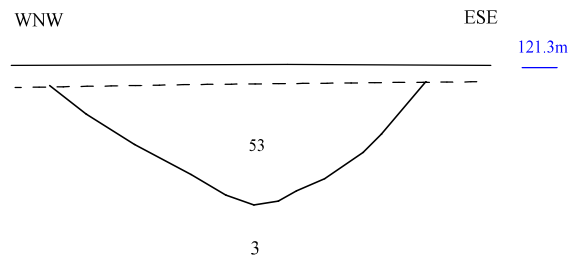
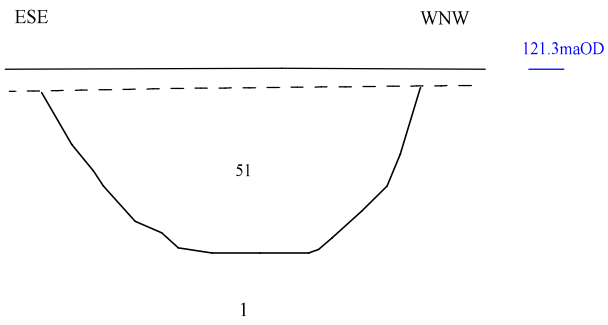
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Figure 3. Location of footings observed, and previous evaluation trenches.





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Figure 4. Sections.



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Plate 1. Plot 31, linear 1, looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Plot 33 under excavation.

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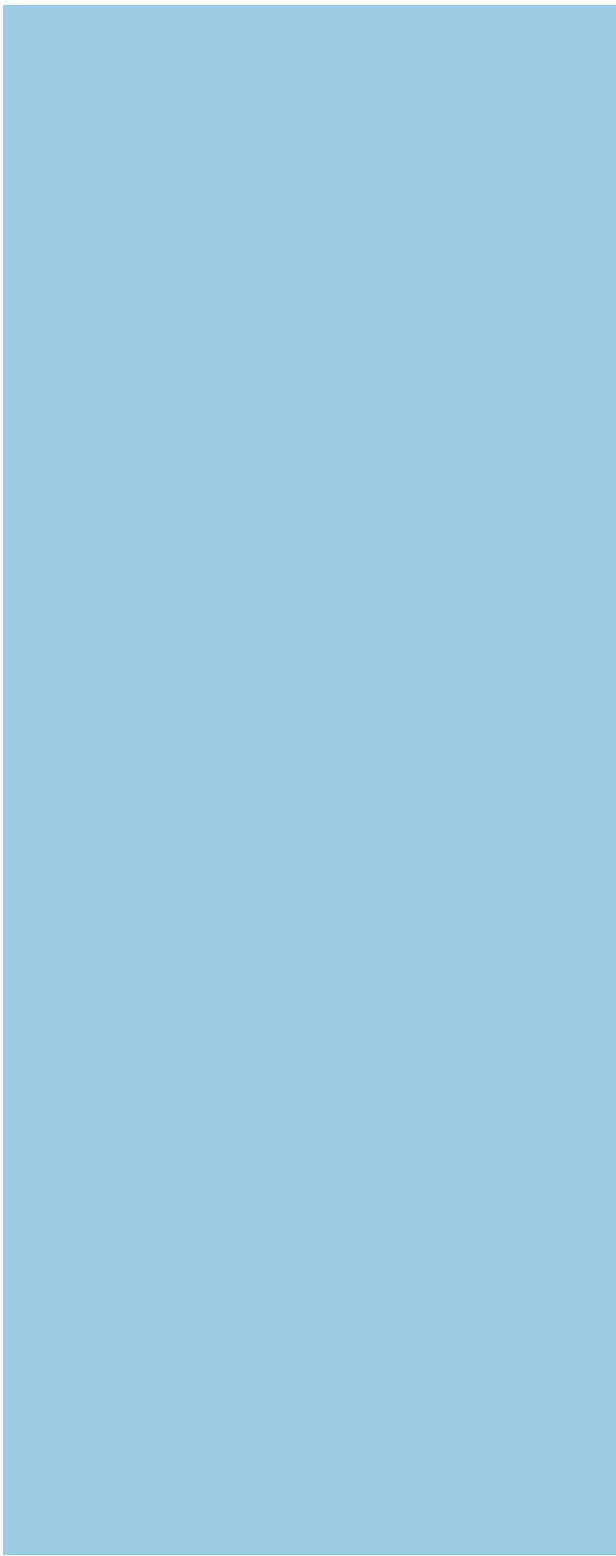
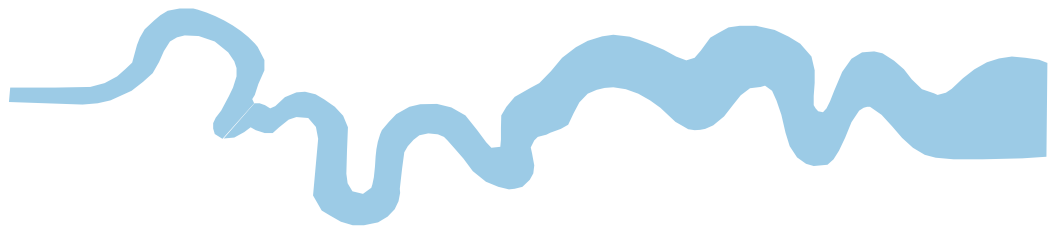
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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