

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Bricklayers Arms, Butts Lane,
Marston, Oxford**

Archaeological Evaluation

by James Lewis

Site Code: BMO11/95

(SP 5275 0895)

**Bricklayers Arms, Butts Lane,
Marston, Oxford**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Rectory Homes**

by James Lewis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BMO 11/95

October 2011

Summary

Site name: Bricklayer's Arms, Butts Lane, Marston, Oxford

Grid reference: SP 5275 0895

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 30th September to 5th October 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James Lewis

Site code: BMO 11/95

Area of site: 0.22ha

Summary of results: The evaluation has revealed that the site has high archaeological potential with occupation deposits of medieval date being encountered.

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 ✓ 13.10.11 Steve Preston ✓ 12.10.11
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Bricklayer's Arms, Butts Lane, Marston, Oxford An Archaeological Evaluation

by James Lewis

Report 11/95

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the former Bricklayer's Arms, Butts Lane, Marston, Oxford (SP 5275 0895) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Dan Moore of Rectory Homes, Rectory House, Thame Road, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8DA.

Planning consent (11/01331/FUL) has been gained from Oxford City Council for the construction of five new houses with access and garages and conversion of the existing structure to residential use. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires field evaluation to assess the archaeological potential of the site and, if necessary allow the formulation of an appropriate strategy to mitigate the effects of development on archaeological deposits.

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 City Council's policies on archaeology. A second planning condition relates to recording of the existing historic building. This will form the subject of a separate report. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, archaeological officer for the city. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis and Danielle Milbank between 30th September and 5th October 2011 and the site code is BMO 11/95. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the centre of Martson at the junction between Church Lane and Butts Lane (Fig. 2). Marston is located approximately 3km north-east of the centre of the city of Oxford on the eastern edge of the floodplain of the River Cherwell. The river flows north to south and joins the River Thames approximately 2km to the south. The natural geology is mapped as 2nd terrace gravels (BGS 1982), however Oxford clay was observed at the base of the trenches (1 and 2) located in the northeast area of the site and gravel was observed in the bases of the trenches in the southwest of the site (3, 4 and 5). The site lies at 66m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Marston though Marston is not mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002). It is usually considered that the parish church lies close to the centre of a settlement and here the site lies approximately 50m north-east from the church of St Nicholas.

The Upper Thames region is rich in archaeology though only a modest number of finds are recorded for the immediate environs of Marston with Roman finds recorded to the south-east being the most notable (Dodd 2003).

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 archaeological 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 the medieval and early post-medieval Marston are present.

Five trenches which targeted the footprints of the proposed buildings were to be excavated. Four trenches (1-4) were to measure 12m long and the remaining trench (5) 6m in length. Each trench was to be excavated using a JCB-type digger fitted with a toothless bucket until archaeological deposits or the natural underlying geology was encountered. Archaeological features were to be hand cleaned, excavated and recorded. A sufficient number of features were to be investigated in order to fulfil the aims of the project. Spoilheaps were to be searched using a metal detector.

Results

Five trenches were excavated, four (1-4) were in their intended positions however one (5) was relocated due to the presence of building (Fig. 3). This was done with the agreement of Mr David Radford. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. A list of excavated features forms Appendix 2.

Trench 1 (Figs 4 and 5, Pl. 3)

Trench 1 was aligned west–east and measured 11.60m long and between 0.9 to 1.17m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.33m of Tarmac and hardcore, which overlay 0.37m thick of dark grey clayey silty subsoil (50); below this was a thin layer of dark green silty clay (66) between 0.04–0.1m thick. This layer terminated approximately 1m from the east end of the trench. Below this was grey-blue silty clay (65) 0.05m–0.12m thick which contained two iron nails, tile and pottery dating from the 19th- 20th centuries,. Underneath this was a compact limestone surface (64) 0.06–0.1m thick which covered almost the whole of the base of the trench. At the east end of the trench a small ‘sondage’ was excavated in order to establish the depth of the natural geology and obtain any dating evidence that may be present under the stone surface. Under layer 64 was brown grey clayey sand (70), 0.35m thick but with no dating evidence. This overlay the natural geology which consisted of Oxford Clay.

Trench 2 (Pl. 1)

Trench 2 was aligned NE-SW and measured 12.6m long and 0.86m wide. The stratigraphy comprised of 0.28m of Tarmac and hardcore, which overlay dark grey clayey silt (50), 0.55m thick. Below this was the natural geology consisting of Oxford Clay with limestone inclusions. No features were identified in this trench.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 5, Pl 4)

Trench 3 was aligned NW-SE and measured 12m long and 0.83m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of Tarmac 0.18m thick, which at the NW end of the trench overlay dark grey clayey silty subsoil (50), 0.23m thick. On the south-west side of the trench the subsoil became progressively thinner as it gave way to green grey sandy clay (51, see below) underneath it, while on the north side it was observed throughout the trench covering the green sandy clay (51). In the centre of the trench under the subsoil was observed a layer of limestone (59), of roughly square and rectangular pieces extended across the width of the trench. The dimensions of these stones were 0.4m wide and 0.1m deep. The limestone layer abutted a N-S aligned wall foundation (58) which consisted of thin (20mm thick) roughly hewn square and rectangular slabs of limestone. It was unclear if it continued beyond the south-east side of the trench. The wall was 320mm wide and 110mm thick.

The wall lay on top of green grey sandy clay (51) which measured 0.4m thick and extended beyond the sides and the south-eastern end of the trench. The layer contained pottery dating from the 10th to the mid 14th century AD. Below this layer was encountered the natural geology consisting of gravels.

Layer 51 overlay three ditch termini. Feature 5 was aligned N-S and extended beyond the south-western side of the trench. It was 1.25m wide and 0.39m deep and contained grey sandy clay (56) with a small amount of animal bone and medieval pottery dating from the 10th to the mid 14th centuries AD. Feature 6 was a NE-SW aligned ditch terminal and extended beyond the south-west side of the trench. The ditch was 1.47m wide and 0.32m deep. It contained compact green yellow sandy clay (57) with tile and medieval pottery dating from between the 10th to the mid 14th centuries. Feature 7 was a N-S aligned ditch terminal and extended beyond the north-eastern edge of the trench. The ditch was 0.43m wide and 0.13m deep. It contained green-yellow sandy clay (60) with pottery dating from the 10th to the mid 14th century.

Trench 4 (Figs 4 and 5, Pl. 2)

Trench 4 was aligned NW-SE and measured 12m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil, which overlay 0.35m of subsoil (50). Underneath this was green grey sandy clay (51) 0.2m thick and this overlay the natural gravel geology. Seven features were identified in this trench. Feature 1 was a pit containing a modern pig burial (the bones were retained on site once the identification had been carried out) which was lined with chalk (53) and contained brown grey clayey silt (52). The burial extended beyond the south-eastern terminus of the trench and the observable measurements were 1.8m long, 0.4m wide and 0.1m deep.

The pig burial truncated an N-S aligned ditch (2) which was only partly accessible in the trench. It was 0.28m deep and at least 0.5m wide. It contained dark brown grey sandy silt (54) with pottery dating from the 10th to the mid 14th centuries AD. Adjacent to the ditch was a small shallow pit (3) which measured 0.52m in diameter and was 0.11m deep. This contained firm brown grey sandy silt (55) with no finds. Feature 4 was an irregular shaped feature possibly a junction between several features with no stratigraphic succession observed in section. The ditch was aligned NE-SW and was 1.7m wide, and 0.22m deep. It contained firm grey brown sandy clay (69) with pottery generally dating from the 10th to the mid 14th century. However, a single sherd may be as late as the 16th century.

Feature 10 was a shallow circular spread and measured 0.55m in diameter and 0.07m deep. It contained small slabs of limestone mixed with light grey sandy clay (62), but no finds. This truncated an N-S aligned

shallow gully (9 and 8) which was 0.46m wide and 0.1m deep. The gully contained compact green brown sandy clay (61 and 63) and animal bone.

Trench 5 (Figs 4 and 5)

Trench 5 was aligned NW-SE and measured 6m long and between 0.6-0.8m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m thick of topsoil, which overlay 0.22m thick of subsoil and below this was the natural geology of terrace gravels.

Two shallow inter-connecting gullies were observed in the trench. Two slots (11 and 12) were excavated into the gully which was aligned N-S. The gully was 0.53m wide and 0.1m deep. It contained compact brown grey sandy clay (67 and 68) and contained tile and single piece of pottery dated to the mid 14th century.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 96 sherds with a total weight of 894g. It was all medieval or later. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975-1350. 34 sherds, 318g.

OXBF: North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050 – 1400. 2 sherds, 117g.

OPY: Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075 – 1350. 51 sherds, 358g.

OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 1 sherd, 2g.

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 4 sherds, 78g.

WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th - 20th C. 4 sherds, 21g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region, and indicate that there was activity at the site from the later 11th – early 13th century, after which time it appears to have been abandoned until the post-medieval period. The fact that only a single sherd of OXAM was present suggests very strongly that medieval activity had all but ceased by the early years of the 13th century, as the ware is usually very common at sites of the 13th – 16th centuries in the region.

The assemblage is generally in very good condition, and appears reliably stratified. The bulk of the pottery is fragments of unglazed jars, and a number of rimsherds from such vessels are present. In addition, there is a rim

and handle from an OXBF pitcher, a rare but not unknown form in that particular fabric. The assemblage appears to be of an entirely domestic nature.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from nine separate contexts within the evaluated area. A total of 25 fragments of bone were present for analysis, weighing 713g (Appendix 4). The surface preservation of the remains was good, although the majority of elements were midshafts fragments, with articular ends absent.

Initial analysis separated all fragments into generalized animal size categories, with each category representing differing groups of animal (i.e. “large”= horse and cattle; “medium”= sheep/goat, pig etc.; and “small” = cat, dog etc.). Wherever possible, more specific animal species identifications and side of element were made, allowing the minimum number of individuals/animals (MNI) present within this assemblage to be determined.

Due to the lack of skeletal element duplication, the minimum number of individuals present within this assemblage was found to be four: two large animals (one horse and one cow), one medium animal (sheep/goat), and one unidentified small animal.

A horse individual was represented by a single intermediate phalanx in ditch (69). The cow was identified by a left talus and several fragments of left tibia in gully (61). The sheep/goat was represented by the proximal half of a right femur from context (65) and a loose tooth from ditch terminus (56). The small unidentified animal was represented by a single longbone fragment in ditch (69). No evidence of butchery practices were recorded (i.e. cutmarks), and no further information could be retrieved from these animal remains.

Tile by Jamie Lewis

A total of 76g of tile was recovered from two medieval features (6 and 12) and one post-medieval layer (65). It was all hand made however the post-medieval tile was orange as opposes to the dull red of the tile found in the medieval features. The majority of the tile (56g) was found in the post-medieval layer.

Metal by Jamie Lewis

Two corroded iron nails were recovered from layer 65 which covered the stone surface in trench 1. The nails weighed 46g and their dimensions were between 40 and 63mm in length, their square shafts are 10mm wide and their oval heads 21-24mm long and 13mm wide. Both nails are hand made and date to the 19th or 20th centuries.

Conclusion

This investigation at the Bricklayer's Arms has revealed that the site has high archaeological potential with a number of archaeological deposits dating to the Medieval period. The ceramic evidence places this activity between the 10th to the mid 14th centuries although a later date of 12th to the mid-14th centuries is more likely. The apparent hiatus from the mid-14th century prior to reuse in late post-medieval times is an often noted event in the archaeological record. The deposits revealed appear to mostly represent activity comprising boundary or other features such as for stock management within a settlement complex.

References

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- Williams, A and Martin G H, 2002, *Doomsday Book, A complete Translation*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at SW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	11.60	1.6	0.8-1.17	0-0.33m tarmac and hardcore, 0.33-0.70m black clayey silt, 0.67-0.80m dark green silty clay (not observed though the whole trench), 0.80m-0.90m green-blue, 0.90-0.97 stone surface. In 'sondage' stone surface terminates at 0.8m. 0.8-1.15m brown grey clayey sand, 1.15m+ natural geology consisting of Oxford Clay. Features 64. [Pl. 3]
2	12.6	1.6	0.83	0-0.28m tarmac and hardcore, 0.28-0.83m black grey clayey silt, 0.83m+ natural geology consisting of Oxford Clay. No features. [Pl. 1]
3	12	1.6	0.83	0-0.18m tarmac and hardcore, 0.18-0.41m black grey clayey silt, 0.41-0.81m green grey sandy clay, 0.83m+ natural geology consisting of 2nd Terrace Gravels. Features 5, 6, 7 and 58. [Pl. 4]
4	12	1.6	0.65	0-0.1m topsoil, 0.1-0.45 black grey clayey silt, 0.45-0.65m green grey sandy clay, 0.45m+ natural geology consisting of 2nd Terrace Gravels. Features 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10. [Pl. 2]
5	6	1.6	0.6-0.8	0-0.3m topsoil, 0.3-0.52m black grey clayey silt, 0.53m+ natural geology consisting of 2nd Terrace Gravels. Features 11 and 12.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

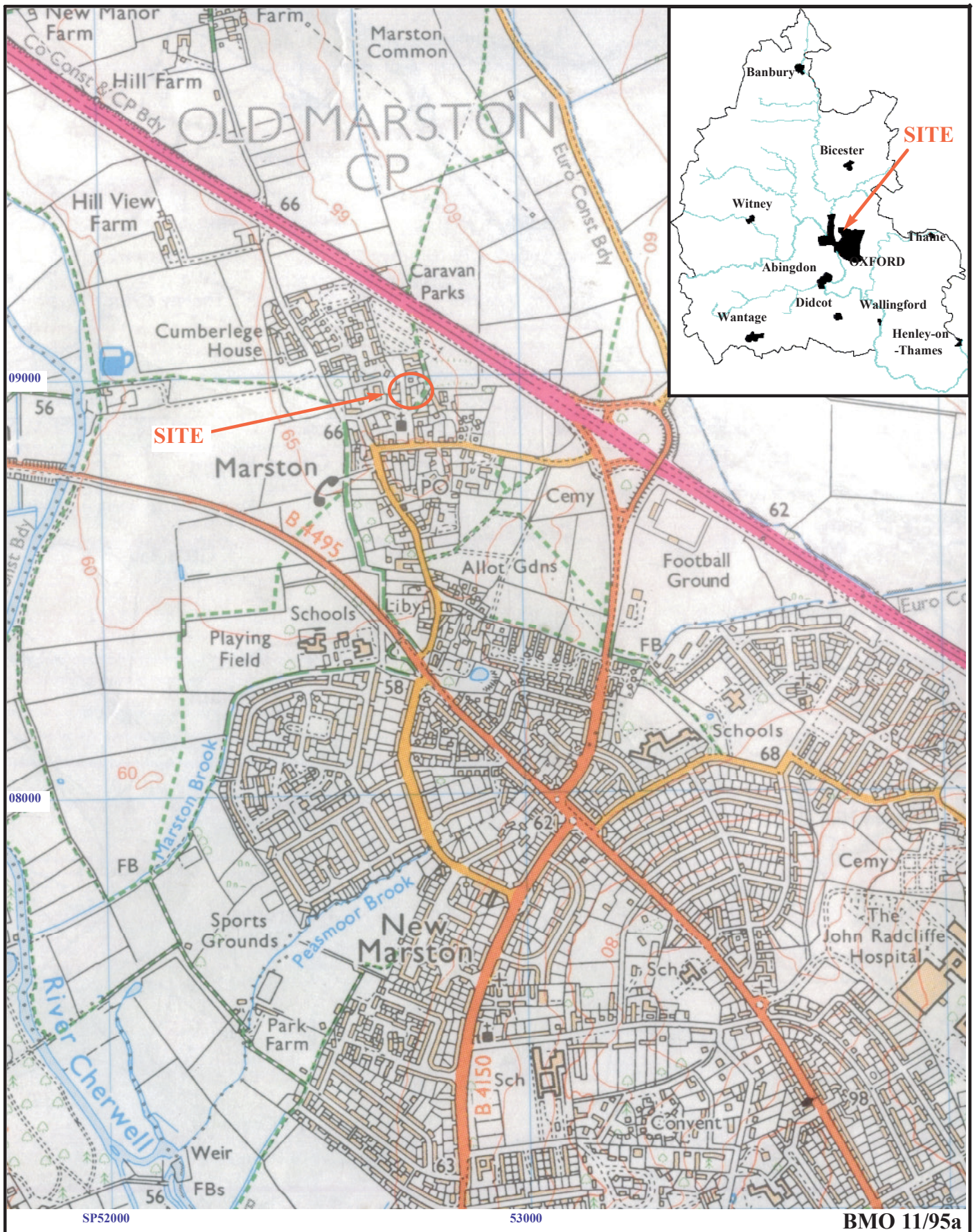
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3 & 4		51	Medieval Layer	Medieval	Pottery
4	1	52	pig grave	Post-medieval	Unknown
4	1	53	pig burial	Post-medieval	Unknown
4	2	54	Ditch slot	Medieval	Pottery
4	3	55	Pit	Medieval	Stratigraphic
3	5	56	Ditch terminus	Medieval	Pottery
3	6	57	Ditch terminus	Medieval	Pottery
3		58	Wall foundation	Post-medieval	Stratigraphic
3		59	Stone layer	Post-medieval	Stratigraphic
3	7	60	Ditch terminus	Medieval	Pottery
4	8	61	Gully slot	Medieval	Stratigraphic
4	10	62	Spread	Medieval	Stratigraphic
4	9	63	Gully slot	Medieval	Stratigraphic
1	-	64	Stone surface	Late Post Medieval	Stratigraphic
1		65	Post medieval layer	Late Post Medieval	Pottery
1		66	Post medieval layer	Late Post Medieval	Stratigraphic
5	11	67	Gully slot	Medieval	Stratigraphic
5	12	68	Gully slot	Medieval	Pottery
4	4	69	Ditch slot	Medieval	Pottery
1		70	Layer	Post-medieval	Stratigraphic

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

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>OXAC</i>		<i>OXBF</i>		<i>OXY</i>		<i>OXAM</i>		<i>OXDR</i>		<i>WHEW</i>	
		<i>Context</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>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
		51 (under 58)	5	30	1	10	14	74	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	2	54	1	40			1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	4	69	10	90	1	107	7	64	1	2	-	-	-	-
3	7	60	1	2	-	-	8	74	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	12	68	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
1		65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	78	4	21
3	5	56	7	28	-	-	15	102	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	6	57	10	128	-	-	5	35	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Total	34	318	2	117	51	358	1	2	4	78	4	21

APPENDIX 4: Catalogue of animal bone

Context		Number of Fragments	Weight (g)	Identified fragments – by animal size			Comments
Cut	Deposit			Large	Medium	Small	
-	51	3	30	3			-
2	54	1	12		1		-
5	56	3	10		3		sheep/goat tooth
6	57	4	41		4		-
7	60	2	18		2		-
8	61	6	470	6			cow left talus and tibia
Tr 1	65	1	85		1		sheep/goat right femur
12	68	1	6		1		-
4	69	4	41	1	2	1	horse phalanx, small animal
Total / MNI		25	713	1 horse 1 cow	1 sheep/goat	1 unidentified	-



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Figure 1. Location of site within Marston, Oxford, and Oxfordshire.

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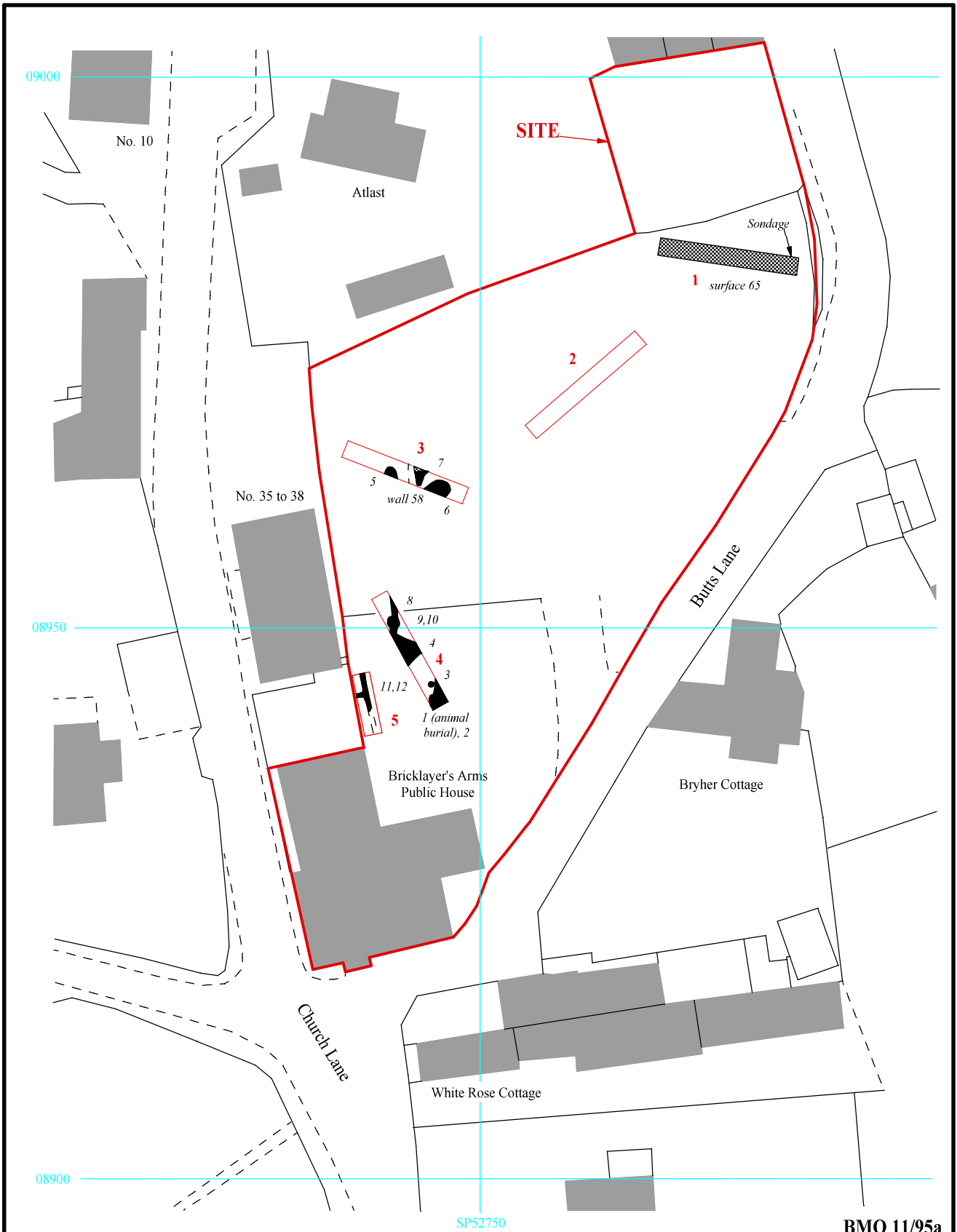


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Butts Lane.

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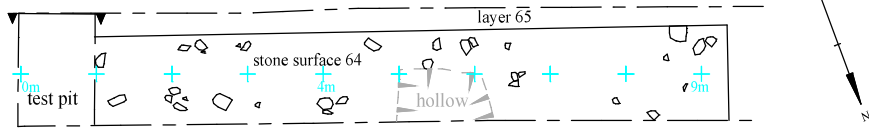


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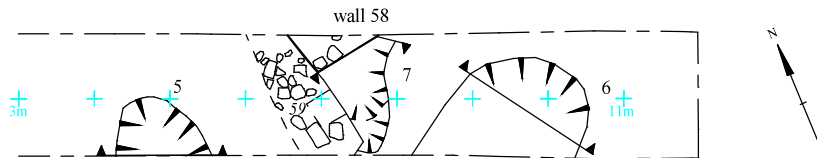
Figure 3. Location of trenches.



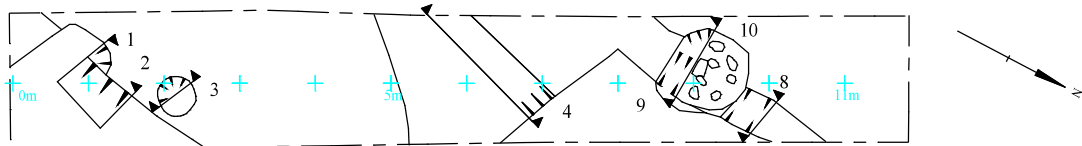
Trench 1



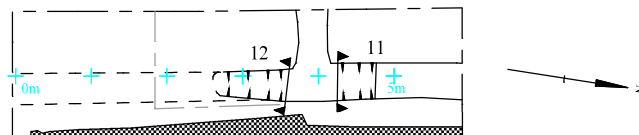
Trench 3



Trench 4



Trench 5



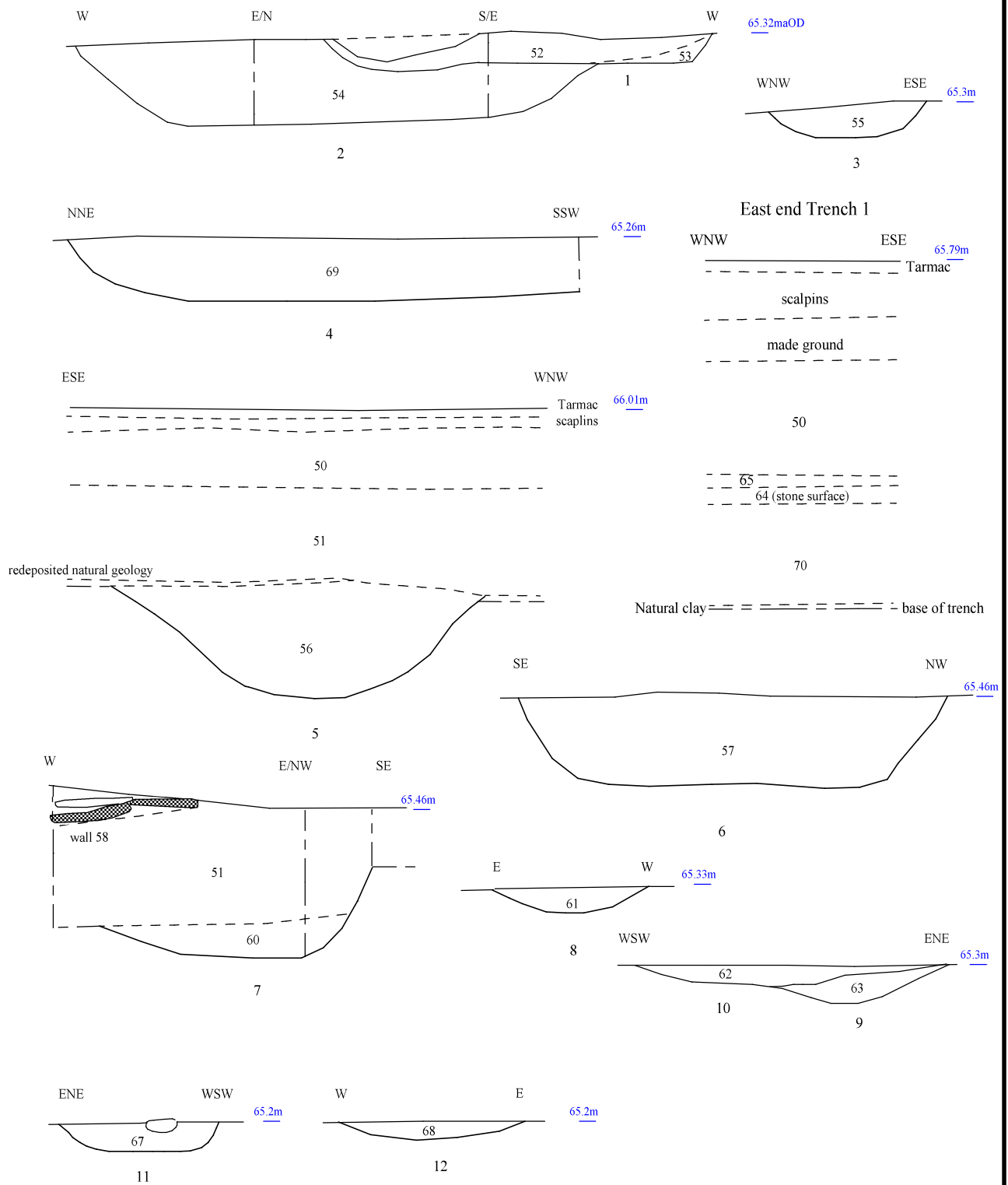
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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



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Figure 5. Sections.





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



Plate 2. Trench 4 looking south, Scales: 1m and 2m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 1, stone surface, looking west north west, Scales: 1m and 2m



Plate 4. Trench 3, Feature 7, looking north, Scale: 0.5m.

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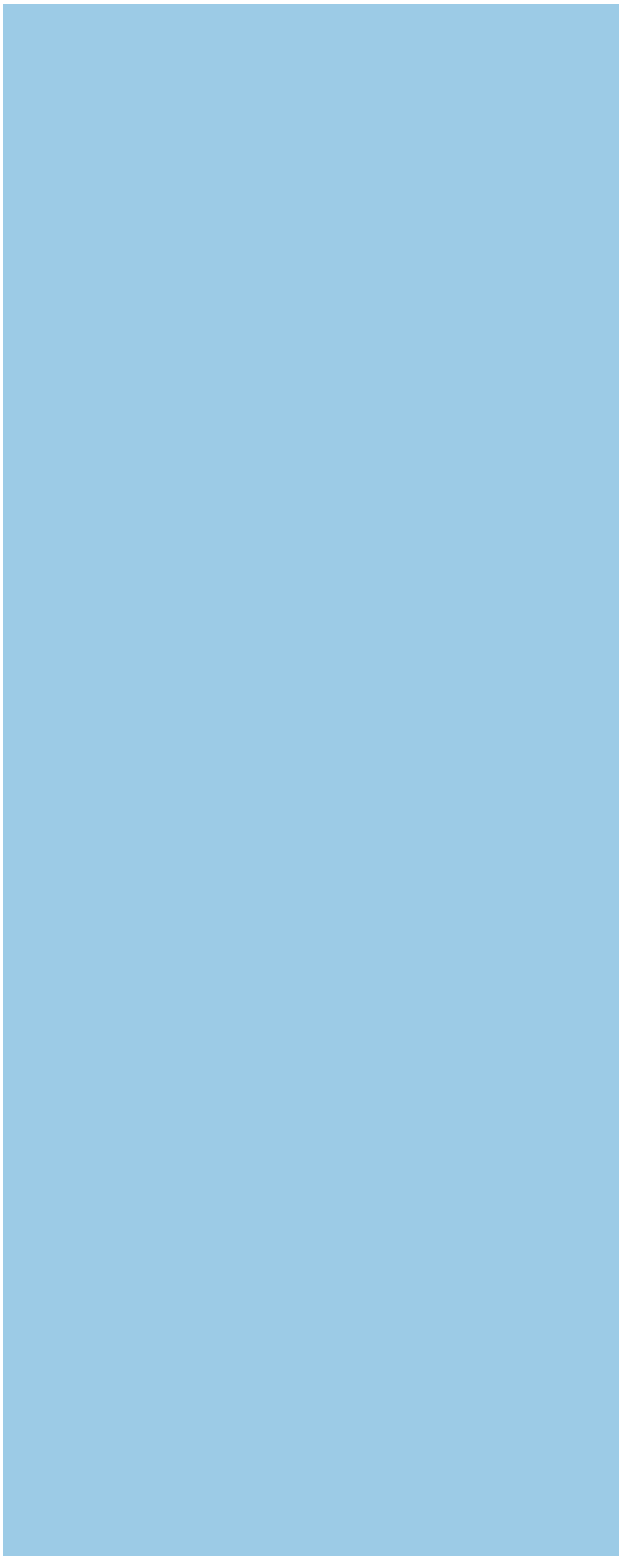
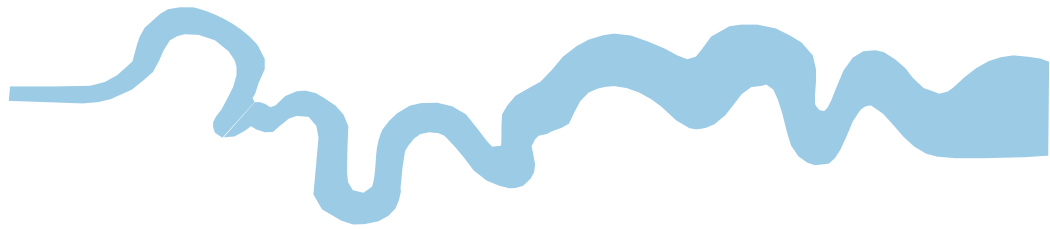
Plates 3 and 4.

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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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